the weekly Standard

MAY 19, 2008

$3.95

REV. WRIGHT'S 'TRUMPET'
STANLEY KURTZ

A Counterinsurgency Grows in Khost

ANN MARLOWE reports on an unheralded U.S. success in Afghanistan

Governor of Khost province Arsala Jamal and U.S. Navy CDR Dave Adams place a cornerstone for a village dam.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE BACKBONE OF AMERICA

America's world-class steel industry generates 1.2 million jobs and contributes $350 billion to our economy.

Steel is the backbone of American manufacturing – and makes much of the equipment vital to our nation's military. Innovation and technology have transformed America's steel industry into one of the world's most competitive, sustainable and environmentally progressive. Steel productivity has more than tripled since the early 1980s – and that makes America stronger at home and abroad.

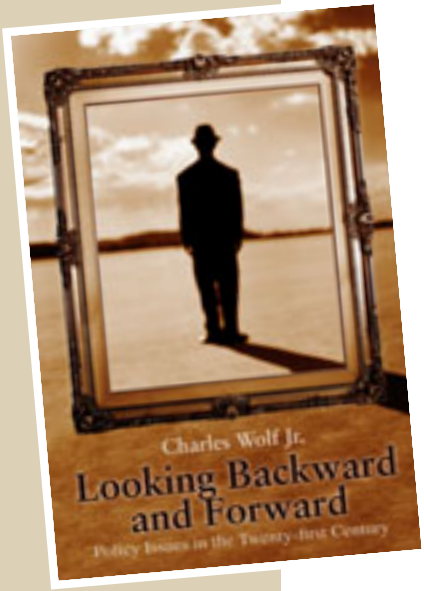
The New Steel Feel the Strength.

For more information, visit www.steel.org

A message from the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NEW FROM HOOVER PRESS



CHARLES WOLF JR.

Looking Backward and Forward

Policy Issues in the Twenty-first Century

"Charlie Wolf is not only prescient, principled, and a graceful writer—he is a one-man refutation of the proposition that economics is "the dismal science." These columns are a superb window on a wide range of modern life."

R. James Woolsey, *former director of the Central Intelligence Agency*

"Charlie Wolf's collection of essays is readable, educational, and provocative. With careful analysis and logic, he explodes myth after myth. He grades himself and fully deserves the high marks most of his op-eds receive."

Frank C. Carlucci, *former secretary of defense*

"In a world of conventional wisdom, Charles Wolf is a rare original thinker whose essays are replete with lucid analysis that yields gems of wisdom mined from across our political, economic, and foreign policy landscape. The essays are also wonderfully readable."

Karen Elliott House, *former publisher of the* Wall Street Journal *and a Rand trustee*

This collection of twenty-five essays written over the past five years by international economic policy expert Charles Wolf Jr. covers a range of economic, political, security, and diplomatic issues. Wolf looks at the challenges facing the United States at home and around the globe, including critical issues regarding China, Japan, Korea, Russia, Iraq, and other key locales.

April 2008, 165 pages
$25.00, cloth
$15.00, paper

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

To order, call 800.935.2882 or visit www.hoover.org

HOOVER INSTITUTION

. . . ideas defining a free society

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Stanford California 94305-6010 Toll-free: 877.466.8374 Fax: 650.723.1687 info@hoover.stanford.edu www.hoover.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a) oil

b) natural gas

c) wind

d) solar

e) biofuels

✓ f) all of the above

bp

beyond petroleum®

© 2008 BP Products North America Inc.

bp.com/us

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Contents

May 19, 2008 • Volume 13, Number 34

2 Scrapbook ..... *JFK's foibles, the PC police, etc.*

4 Casual ..... *Joseph Bottum, logophile*

6 Correspondence ..... *The Newseum, China, and more*

9 Editorial ..... *Countering Iran*

Articles

12 Gloomy Republicans *With good reason* ..... BY FRED BARNES

13 The War Over the War (cont.) *What the G.I. Bill debate is really about* ..... BY REIHAN SALAM

15 The Job Isn't Senator-in-Chief *Obama and McCain need to be ready on day one* ..... BY LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY

17 We're All Gun Nuts Now *The Democrats sidle up to the Second Amendment* ..... BY JOHN MCCORMACK

Cover: U.S. Navy / Ensign Christopher Weis

Features

19 A Counterinsurgency Grows in Khost ..... BY ANN MARLOWE
An unheralded U.S. success in Afghanistan

27 The Boris Blitz ..... BY JAMES KIRCHICK
On the hustings with Boris Johnson, London's unlikely new mayor

32 Jeremiah Wright's 'Trumpet' ..... BY STANLEY KURTZ
Barack Obama's former pastor's magazine reveals the content of his theology

Books & Arts

37 Trouble Down Below *What's wrong with Latin America* ..... BY MARK FALCOFF

40 The Strategist *Walt Rostow in defense of human rights* ..... BY DANIEL SULLIVAN

41 Hollywood Hybrid *How the stars are reducing their carbon footprint* ..... BY JOE QUEENAN

43 Weapon of Choice *Inside the mind of an abortion-rights warrior* ..... BY JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND

44 'Orfeo' at 400 *Monteverdi's gift to music and drama* ..... BY ALGIS VALIUNAS

47 A $superhero's Saga *How the rich are different from you and me* ..... BY JOHN PODHORETZ

48 Parody ..... *Mars attacks the global candy market*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor*
Richard Starr, *Deputy Editor* **Claudia Anderson,** *Managing Editor*
Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Ferguson, Robert Messenger, *Senior Editors* **Philip Terzian,** *Literary Editor*
Stephen F. Hayes, Matt Labash, *Senior Writers* **Victorino Matus,** *Assistant Managing Editor*
Matthew Continetti, *Associate Editor* **Dean Barnett, Jonathan V. Last,** *Staff Writers* **Michael Goldfarb,** *Online Editor*
Sonny Bunch, *Assistant Editor* **Kari Barbic, John McCormack, Samantha Sault,** *Editorial Assistants*
Philip Chalk, *Design Director* **Lev Nisnevitch,** *Photography Director* **Carolyn Wimmer,** *Executive Assistant*
Gerard Baker, Max Boot, Joseph Bottum, Tucker Carlson, Noemie Emery, Joseph Epstein,
David Frum, David Gelernter, Reuel Marc Gerecht, Brit Hume, Frederick W. Kagan, Robert Kagan,
Charles Krauthammer, Tod Lindberg, P.J. O'Rourke, John Podhoretz, Irwin M. Stelzer, *Contributing Editors*

Terry Eastland, *Publisher*
Peter Dunn, *Associate Publisher* **Nicholas H.B. Swezey,** *Advertising Director* **Stephanie Decker,** *Advertising Director*
Robert Dodd, *Canada Manager* **Don Eugenio,** *Midwest Manager* **Melissa Garnier,** *Canada Manager (Montreal)* **Catherine Lowe,** *Marketing Director*
Catherine Daniel, *Advertising & Marketing Asst.* **Mairead Cagney,** *Accounting Manager* **Taybor Cook,** *Office Manager* **Andrew Kaumeier,** *Staff Assistant*

Advertising inquiries: *Please call* ***202-293-4900*** *or visit* ***www.weeklystandard.com/advertising***

the weekly Standard

The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of News America Incorporated, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-850-682-7644 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2008, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in The Weekly Standard may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. The Weekly Standard is a registered trademark of News America Incorporated.

BPA INTERNATIONAL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ask What You Can Do for Your Old Boss

When The Scrapbook has a serious question about history—the disconcerting facts, the complex background, the whole truth and nothing but—where else to turn but *Parade* magazine? Sometimes our inquiries are answered by *Parade*'s resident brainiac, the aptly named Marilyn vos Savant, and sometimes by everyone's favorite polymath, Walter Scott.

Last week John F. Kennedy was on our mind, so imagine our good fortune when we opened *Parade* and found a Newsmakers interview—"JFK: The Inside Story"—with Kennedy's one-time speechwriter, Ted Sorensen, who's just published a memoir. For all things Camelot, Sorensen is manifestly the go-to guy: He's the author of *Kennedy* (1965), *The Kennedy Legacy* (1969), *Let the Word Go Forth: The Speeches, Statements and Writings of John F. Kennedy, 1947-1963* (1988), and of course, *Profiles in Courage* (1956), for which John F. Kennedy won the Pulitzer Prize.

As it happens, "JFK: The Inside Story" consisted of two brief questions, the second of which had nothing to do with JFK; so our attention was naturally drawn to the first question: "Do JFK's personal failings lessen his political legacy?"

Not surprisingly, Sorensen's response was succinct and vehement: "No," he said—and you can almost hear the fist crash down on the table. "Just think about Kennedy's achievements: resolving the Cuban Missile Crisis without firing a shot; turning this country's direction on its treatment of black citizens completely around; launching the first serious effort to explore space; the Peace Corps. None of those is diminished in the slightest by the speculation about his personal life."

To be sure, with the exception of the Peace Corps, all of Sorensen's assertions on behalf of his hero are debatable, to say the least. But The Scrapbook has to admire the persistent, tenacious, utterly blindered, and deliberately obtuse loyalty contained in that one word—"speculation"—about John F. Kennedy's acrobatic personal life. Forty-six years after Marilyn Monroe sang "Happy Birthday, Mr. President" at Madison Square Garden, 80-year-old Ted Sorensen is still guarding the sand castle against the tide. ♦

Indiana and the Klan

As the old story goes, the police are rounding up Communist protesters in New York when a man who turned out to heckle the protesters gets caught up in the dragnet. "Officer, officer," he remonstrates with the cop swinging the truncheon. "I'm an anti-Communist."

"I don't care what kind of Communist you are," replies the cop. "You're under arrest."

It's a funny joke. Not so funny, though, if you're the victim. Keith John Sampson, a 50-something janitor and student at Indiana University/Purdue University-Indianapolis (IUPUI, or "ooey-pooey" as the locals say), writes in the *New York Post* of his nightmare when he ran afoul of IUPUI's affirmative action enforcers. His crime? Reading a book about the Ku Klux Klan. It was an anti-Klan book, of course, but the university didn't care what kind of a Klan book it was—they were agin it.

Last November, writes Sampson, "I was found guilty of 'racial harassment' for reading . . . Todd Tucker's *Notre Dame vs. the Klan: How the Fighting Irish Defeated the Ku Klux Klan*. I was reading it on break from my campus job as a janitor. The same book is in the university library. Tucker recounts events of 1924, when the loathsome Klan was a dominant force in Indiana—until it went to South Bend to taunt the Irish Catholic students at the University of Notre Dame. When the KKK tried to rally, the students confronted them. They stole Klan robes and destroyed their crosses, driving the KKK out of town in a downpour."

Acting on a complaint from a co-worker of Sampson's, "the Affirmative Action Office of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis . . . ruled that my 'repeatedly reading the book . . . constitutes racial harassment in that you demonstrated disdain and insensitivity to your co-workers.' . . . I knew that most of the faculty, staff and students at Indiana University were good people. . . . But the $106,000-a-year affirmative-action officer who declared me guilty of 'racial harassment' never spoke to me or examined the book. My own union—the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees—sent an obtuse shop steward to stifle my freedom to read. He told me, 'You could be fired,' that reading the book was 'like bringing pornography to work.'"

Happily for Sampson, the university, after a few whacks from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education and the ACLU, has dropped the complaint. But it should have taken them six minutes to do so, not six months. Intolerance is unfortunately alive and well in Indiana; it's just that the color of the robes has changed from Klan white to academic black. ♦

Don't Forget Leghorn

The Scrapbook noticed a telling anomaly last week: The cyclone which devastated Burma also revealed a fault line—and a gaping one at that—

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of June 25, 2001)

in the world's news organizations. Half seem to refer to the South Asian state wedged between the Indian subcontinent and Thailand as "Burma," and the other half call it "Myanmar."

As a dedicated stick-in-the-mud, THE SCRAPBOOK insists on the old name of "Burma"—and so does the rest of THE WEEKLY STANDARD. This puts us at odds with Reuters, the Associated Press, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, the *New York Times*, CNN, and the *Wall Street Journal*, all of whom refer to "Myanmar." But it puts us in distinguished company as well: On the BBC, in the *Baltimore Sun*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *USA Today*, the *Guardian*, and the *Daily Telegraph*, it's still "Burma."

We're not sure why these other journalistic enterprises have made the choices they have, but we know why we don't call it Myanmar: In our opinion, the two names constitute a linguistic distinction without a difference (we'll spare you the details), but one is traditional and easily pronounced by English speakers and the other is not. More important, "Myanmar" was decreed in 1989 by Burma's hideous junta. The generals who misrule in Rangoon—or Yangon, as they insist on calling it—may impose misery on the Burmese population, but we shouldn't allow them to dictate English spelling.

(There is one other compelling reason to resist: Readers of a certain age will recall those charming advertisements for a famous brand of shaving cream along America's roadsides in the pre-Interstate era: Within this vale / of toil and sin / your head grows bald / but not your chin—Myanmar-Shave?)

Yes, THE SCRAPBOOK relents on some adjustments to the atlas. We were delighted when the post-Soviet Russians rescued St. Petersburg from Leningrad, and the Germans traded in Karl-Marx-Stadt for Chemnitz. We accept, as a fait accompli, China's 1979 insistence on the Pinyin version of Chinese-in-English, which gave us Beijing for Peking, switched Canton to Guangzhou, and replaced Mao Tse-tung with Mao Zedong.

But the jury is still out, as far as we're concerned, on Sri Lanka for Ceylon and Burkina Faso for Upper Volta—both political, rather than linguistic, innovations—and we are holding the line, by God, on Mumbai, which even many residents of Bombay reportedly refuse to call their city. ♦

Author! Author!

THE SCRAPBOOK is pleased to note a new book by WEEKLY STANDARD contributing editor Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*. Weighing in at 116 pages, elegantly written and powerfully argued, this is our kind of book: It can be consumed in one gulp—but it raises fundamental questions that stay with the reader long after the essay goes down the hatch.

Kagan begins by observing, "The world has become normal again." He ends by asking, "The question is whether the world's democracies will again rise to that challenge." In between is an enjoyable, thought-provoking, and question-stimulating essay on the world of the 21st century. Buy this book. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Casual

Agenbites

Thwart. Yes, *thwart* is a good word. *Thwarted*. *Athwart*. A kind of satisfaction lives in such words—a unity, a completion. Teach them to a child, and you'll see what I mean: *skirt*, *scalp*, *drab*, *buckle*, *sneaker*, *twist*, *jumble*. *Squeamish*, for that matter. They taste good in the mouth, and they seem to resound with their own verbal truthfulness.

More like proper nouns than mere words, they match the objects they describe. *Pickle*, *gloomy*, *portly*, *curmudgeon*—sounds that loop back on themselves to close the circle of meaning. They're perfect, in their way. They're what all language wants to be when it grows up.

Admittedly, some of this comes from onomatopoeia: words that echo the sound of what they name. *Hiccup*, for instance, and *zip*. The animal cries of *quack* and *oink* and *howl*. The mechanical noises of *click* and *clack* and *clank*. *Chickadees*, *cuckoos*, and *whip-poor-wills* all get their names this way. *Whooping cranes*, as well, and when I was little, I pictured them as sickly birds, somehow akin to *whooping cough*.

And yet, that word *akin*—that's a good word, too, though it lacks even the near-onomatopoeia of *percussion* and *lullaby*, or the ideophonic picture-drawing of *clickety-clack* and *gobble*. The words I'm thinking of are, rather, the ones that feel right when we say them: accurate expressions, somehow, for themselves. *Apple*, for instance, has always seemed to me the perfect name—a crisp and tanged and ruddy word.

Grammarians may have a technical term for these words that sound true, though I've never come across quite what I'm looking for. Homological, maybe? Autological? Ipsoverific? In a logical sense, of course, some words are literally true or false when applied to themselves. Words about words, typically: *Noun* is a noun, though *verb* is not a verb. *Polysyllabic* is self-true, and *monosyllabic* is not. And this logical notion of autology can be extended. If *short* seems a short word, true of itself, then the shorter *long* must be false of itself.

But what about *jab* or *fluffy* or *sneer*, each of them true in a way that goes beyond logic? *Verbose* has always struck me as a strangely verbose word. *Peppy* has that perky, energetic, spry sound it needs. And was there ever a more supercilious word than *supercilious*? Or one more lethargic than *lethargic*?

Let's coin a term for this kind of poetic, extralogical accuracy. Let's call it agenbite. That's a word Michael of Northgate cobbled up for his 1340 *Remorse of Conscience*—or *Agenbite of Inwit*, as he actually titled the book. English would later settle on the French-born word "remorse" to carry the sense of the Latin *re-mordere*, "to bite again." But Michael didn't know that at the time, and so he simply translated the word's parts: again-bite or (in the muddle of early English spelling) agenbite.

Anyway, these words that sound true need some kind of name. And since they do bite back on themselves, like a snake swallowing its tail, Michael's term will do as well as any other. *Ethereal* is an agenbite, isn't it? All ethereal and airy. *Rapier*, *swashbuckler*, *erstwhile*, *obfuscate*, *spume*—agenbites, every one. *Reverberation* reverberates, and *jingle* jingles. A friend insists that *machination* is a word that tells you all about its Machiavellian self, and surely *sporadic* is a clean agenbite, with something patchy and intermittent in the taste as you say it.

Sheer sound won't make one of these agenbites, however pleasurable the word feels on the tongue. *Perspicacious* is a succulent thing, I suppose, but who ever heard its perspicacity? *Pragmatic* seems closer, but in the end it's not quite hardnosed enough to get the job done. *Pertussis*, the scientific name for whooping cough, is one of those bad Latin terms that doctors used to invent, back in the days before they settled on the odd convention of naming diseases after doctors. And, as far as the sound goes, you can't ask for a better word to pronounce than *pertussis*—but where's the *whoop*?

Odd. Now there's a word that says just what it means. *Dwindle* wants to fade away even while you're saying it. And surely *splendiferous* is a solid agenbite, expressing its own hollow pomposity. For that matter, isn't *hollow* a little hollow, with the sound of a hole at its center? Maybe not, but you always know where you are with words like *dreary* and *gossip* and *gut* and *bludgeon*. Or with onomatopoeics like *flap* and *slurp* and *splash* and *gurgle*. Or with the whole set of English -umbles: *fumble* and *mumble* and *bumble*.

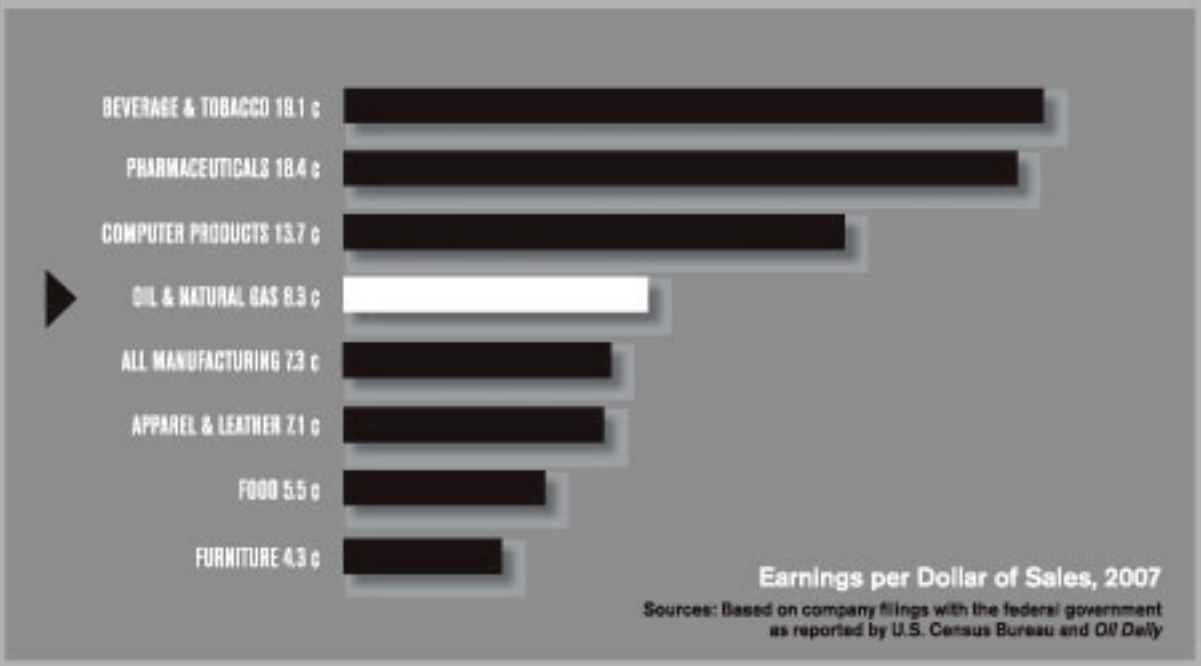
Gargoyle sounds like a word that knows just what it is. *Snake* and *swoop* and *spew* all reach back to gnaw on themselves—agenbites of speech. They're part of what makes poetry work. They're what all language wants to be, when it grows up.

Joseph Bottum

THE WEEKLY STANDARD

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Straight talk on earnings



You may be surprised to learn that the profitability of America's oil and natural gas industry is far less than that of many other major industries. Part of the explanation is that it costs billions of dollars to explore for, produce, refine and distribute our products. In fact, U.S. oil and natural gas companies have invested $1.25 trillion since 1992. These massive investments have a single purpose: ensuring you have the reliable supply of energy you need to maintain your quality of life today and tomorrow.

EnergyTomorrow.org

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

© 2008 API

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

McCain's Virtue

P.J. O'Rourke's article "24 Hours on the 'Big Stick'" (April 28) may have done more for my perception of John McCain than everything I've heard so far. During the primaries, I initially supported a different Republican's candidacy. When McCain became the presumptive nominee, I searched for something to grab onto. I might have found it in O'Rourke's article. O'Rourke's advice that conservatism is more than "lower taxes" and should also be equated with "self-discipline, responsibility, good order, [and] respect for our national institutions" is a welcomed opinion.

Even some of the conservative talking-heads could improve keeping that in mind. McCain may not be the second coming, but those who expect such from a president probably are lacking responsibility and discipline anyhow.

McCain can remind us of what it is to be an American. You can't take that away from him. Another one of McCain's important virtues is that he doesn't talk about America like it was rotting, intolerant, and declining. The other candidates seem to remind us everyday how pathetic we've become. How do you find inspiration in that?

Michael Biever
Wheeling, Ill.

Newsman Patriot

Andrew Ferguson's article on the Newseum ("The Media Builds a Monument to Itself," May 5) brought back memories of my visit to the Newseum back when it was located in Arlington, Virginia. I was shocked then at its insipidness and absence of any substance.

What caught my attention during that earlier visit was the plaque commemorating James Rivington, the founder and publisher of *Rivington's New York Gazetteer*, later named the *Royal Gazette*, which had a few words about his being one of the nation's very first newsmen and publishers. What the plaque failed to say was that Rivington's paper was one of the most vociferous and ardent Tory rags during the War for Independence—always detailing George Washington's defeats, ignoring his victories, praising any British victory, and publishing British propaganda and the poetry of John Andre, the chief of British intelligence in New York.

Neither did the Newseum mention that Rivington's newspaper provided cover for the fact that he was one of Washington's most important spymasters and a patriot. Rivington worked closely with another of Washington's spies, Robert Townsend, whose cover was as a gossip columnist for the *Gazette*. It was Rivington who secretly obtained the British naval signaling codes and passed them to

Washington, who in turn passed them to the French fleet, which used them to defeat the British fleet in the battle of the Chesapeake. That rare French naval victory prevented the British from resupplying their troops at Yorktown, aiding in their defeat in the final battle of the War for Independence.

Had there been computers in Rivington's day, the Newseum could have displayed his mouse pad. But that any newsman might serve his country as a spy and patriot, even in time of war, is absolutely out of the question today. The media have now gone so far as to make such patriotism grounds for banishment from the profession.

Gene Poteat
Alexandria, Va.

Hear Me Roar

I am a woman. Like many women, I have a vagina; nonetheless I found Matt Labash's essay "Hurricane Eve Hits New Orleans" (May 5) enormously entertaining.

The tedious and unseemly *Vagina Monologues* and its ten-year celebration of all things vaginal insults women. Glorifying a woman's private parts as though they represent everything that we are reduces us to just that, which is the ultimate degradation. Surely there are other ways to combat domestic violence.

Shame on Eve Ensler and her absurdly self-indulgent Vagina Warriors.

Marie Harrington
Sylva, N.C.

China's Shame

Ethan Gutmann's article "Carrying a Torch for China" (April 21) aptly observed that the Beijing Olympics had lost their innocence right in 2001, when the Chinese government continued to persecute people instead of really improving human rights. Now we just see the harvest of what was planted many years ago.

Torsten Trey
Arlington, Va.

Repulsed by Wright

I don't see how anyone without an agenda could deny the facts, as laid out by Matthew Continetti in "Right about Obama" (May 12), that show Barack Obama knew about his pastor's hateful ideology from the start. Certainly this "garlic-nosed Italian"—me, a Democrat of 34 years—sussed out Obama as the inauthentic soul that he is from the beginning.

Obama's close association with Rev. Wright is in itself a deal breaker. Moderates like me will be leaving the Democratic party in droves.

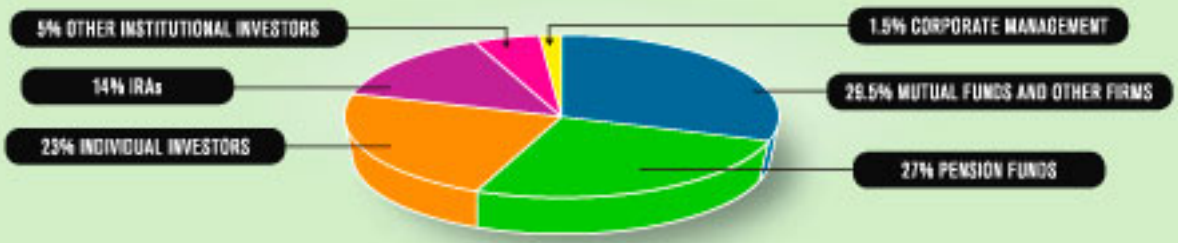
We Hillary supporters who know our candidate—warts and all—will remain loyal. We have her back, and if not this time, we'll propel her to the presidency after McCain's one term fails miserably.

Julianne Barbato
Las Vegas, Nev.

• • •

The Weekly Standard
welcomes letters to the editor.
You may fax letters: (202) 293-4901
or email: editor@weeklystandard.com.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



U.S. Oil and Natural Gas Company Ownership, 2007

Do you own an oil company?

If you've ever wondered who owns America's oil and natural gas companies, chances are the answer is, "you do."

Surprised?

The fact is that if you have a mutual fund account – and 55 million American households, with a median income of under $70,000, do – there's a good chance it invests in oil and natural gas company stocks. If you have an IRA or personal retirement account – and 45 million U.S. households do – there is a good chance it invests in energy stocks.

Tens of millions of Americans own a piece of the U.S. oil and natural gas industry

All this comes from a recent study* of U.S. oil and natural gas company ownership headed by Robert J. Shapiro, undersecretary of commerce for economic affairs under President Bill Clinton.

According to the study, the majority of the industry's shareholders are "middle-class U.S. households with mutual fund investments, pension accounts, other personal retirement accounts, and small personal portfolios."

What many may find particularly surprising is that our industry's corporate management owns only a tiny fraction of company shares.

Specifically, here is what the study found:

- 29.5 percent of U.S. oil and natural gas company shares are owned by mutual funds and other firms
- 27 percent are owned by pension funds
- Individual investors own 23 percent
- 14 percent are held in IRA accounts
- 5 percent are owned by other institutional investors
- 1.5 percent are held by corporate management (significantly less in the largest companies)

These findings tell us something very important: tens of millions of Americans have a stake in the U.S. oil and natural gas industry. When the industry's earnings are strong, the real winners are middle-class Americans, people investing in their retirement security or saving for their children's college education.

So when the political rhetoric gets hot about increasing energy taxes or taking "excess profits" from U.S. oil companies, it is important to step back, look at the facts, and ask yourself, "who does that really hurt?"

To read the full study, visit EnergyTomorrow.org.

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

*SONECON: *The Distribution of Ownership of U.S. Oil and Natural Gas Companies*, September 2007

© 2008 API

EnergyTomorrow.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ENERGY SECURITY? THE ANSWER JUST MIGHT BE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.

Canada holds the world's second-largest oil reserves

Americans know Canada as a good neighbor. What many don't know is that the United States gets more oil from Canada than any other country. Now Canada is poised to increase greatly its oil production, helping secure North American energy supplies for decades to come.

Oil sands in western Canada hold an estimated 173 billion barrels of recoverable oil – the world's second largest reserve – and new technology is making this oil increasingly available to refiners. It's no drop in the bucket: experts estimate that Canada alone could supply all of the growth in U.S. oil needs between now and 2020. Not only could this Canadian oil power our everyday lives, it could also create new well-paying jobs in the United States and Canada.

The U.S. Department of Energy estimates we will need 19 percent more energy in 2030 than in 2006. Canada offers a close and reliable supply of secure energy that can be produced, transported by pipeline, and refined meeting strict environmental standards. It's time to allow the expansion of refineries and pipelines necessary to support new jobs and continue meeting North America's growing energy needs.

EnergyTomorrow.org

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the weekly Standard

Countering Iran

What are we going to do about Iran? When Hillary Clinton surreally promised to obliterate the Islamic Republic if the mullahs nuked Israel, she at least recognized that a nuclear-armed clerical regime is a serious menace, and that successful diplomacy with Tehran without the threat of force is fantasy. How to handle Iran may well be the decisive foreign-policy question of the 2008 presidential campaign—especially if Tehran continues to exploit the vacuum left by the collapse of the Bush administration's Iran policy and the general listlessness of the U.S. presence in the Middle East outside of Iraq.

Tehran is on a roll. Its development of a nuclear weapon progresses. The European Union's attempts to cajole the mullahs to abandon uranium enrichment—the most demanding part of developing the bomb—has become ever-more plaintive; the Europeans promise incentives more than they threaten sanctions. Anxiety in Tehran about the possibility of an American military strike against the regime's nuclear facilities—produced by the president's and vice president's "saber-rattling" and helpfully amplified by French president Nicolas Sarkozy and his foreign minister, Bernard Kouchner—almost vanished in December with the publication of the National Intelligence Estimate, which incongruously asserted that Iran had stopped its quest for a bomb in 2003.

Running with the gift from Langley, Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad outflanked the more cautious and polished crowd led by Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, Iran's second most powerful mullah. Rafsanjani, his sidekick Hassan Rohani, a former nuclear negotiator, and Ali Larijani, an intelligent, titanium-tough former Revolutionary Guards commander who, as Rohani's successor, played well with European diplomats, all appeared worried that Ahmadinejad's aggressiveness might actually provoke George W. Bush to attack another member of the axis of evil. After the NIE's release, all three men gave reluctant concession speeches, emphasizing Iran's victory over the West more than the success of Ahmadinejad's unflinching approach. In a triumphalist mood, Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader who has consistently backed Ahmadinejad, let loose a broadside against the United States in January 2008, referring to America as "Satan incarnate" and calling on Muslims worldwide to emulate the Islamic republic and not Westernized Muslims, who lead to national weakness and perdition.

Iran is on a roll. Spurred by its nuclear success against the Europeans and Americans, the clerical regime is causing trouble on the West Bank and in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, the Persian Gulf, and perhaps most of all, Iraq. The Iranian ruling elite has a vision of the Middle East that is free of America's power and the devilishly seductive pull of its culture.

Spurred by its nuclear success against the Europeans and Americans, the clerical regime is causing trouble on the West Bank and in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, the Persian Gulf, and perhaps most of all, Iraq. Israel may soon be embroiled in an ugly war with Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist movement supported spiritually and militarily by Tehran. This could turn into a two-front confrontation, as Hezbollah, revolutionary Iran's most faithful offspring, is demonstrating its willingness to use force to become the dominant player in Lebanon. Rearmed massively by Tehran since the 2006 summer war against Israel, Hezbollah could again let the missiles fly against northern Israel, while Hamas attacks from Gaza.

Make no mistake about it, Iran is gaming for this kind of confrontation, which will be difficult and costly for Israel. Tehran loved the outpouring of Arab warmth for Hezbollah's leader Hassan Nasrallah in 2006, when even secular Arab moderates started openly to rethink whether they had to live with a Jewish state. Europeans and Americans, especially those of a "realist" persuasion who imagine that Iran's Islamic *mission civilisatrice* has played out, just don't appreciate how much the clerics still enjoy the adulation of anti-American Arabs, especially those who have dropped pan-Arabism and embraced "Islamic values."

The Iranian ruling elite, from the mild-mannered reform-minded Mohammad Khatami to the die-hard spiritual soldiers of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, like Ahmadinejad and Tehran's more bon-vivant mayor, Mohammad

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Baqir Qalibaf, has a vision of the Middle East that is free of America's power and the devilishly seductive pull of its culture. The Hamas-Hezbollah axis, if it holds, is a dream come true for Tehran: At last, Sunni and Shiite militants are working together to bleed Israel, America's colony and the anchor, as they see it, of American imperialism throughout the region. Hamas and Hezbollah allow Iran's rulers—and it is impossible to overstate the extent to which Rafsanjani and Khamenei hate Israel—to be frontline combatants against the Jewish state without incurring (so far) frontline risks of devastating retaliation.

The only real brake on Iranian complicity with Hezbollah and Hamas has been the fear that their aggression against Israel, if seen by Americans and Israelis as Tehran-directed, could increase the odds of a U.S. or Israeli military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities before the regime enriches sufficient uranium for a nuclear arsenal.

This nuclear concern is probably behind the North Korean-Syrian nuclear cooperation, which took a possibly lethal hit when the Israeli air force in September 2007 destroyed a breeder reactor under construction at Dayr az-Zawr in eastern Syria. Although it is possible that cash-strapped Syria on its own undertook to develop nuclear weapons, it is more likely that Iran supported this enterprise as a back-up to its own atom-bomb program. Israel's preemptive strike is a setback for Tehran, but its echo inside Iran appears to be limited, since neither the Israelis nor the Americans used it rhetorically to show what could happen to the mullahs' nuclear project.

Most important, Iran has pushed hard in Iraq, giving aid and military training to militant Shiites, whose targets have included Sunnis, Americans, and other Shiites. The mullahs and their Revolutionary Guards corps have become a small expeditionary force in Iraq and have clearly shown that they aren't peace-loving Persian uncles trying to bring stability and prosperity to their Shiite Arab nephews.

President Bush's surge caught the Iranians off-guard and turned what had been a winning situation for Iran in Iraq—multiple Shiite parties dependent upon Iranian aid and good will in a savage battle against Sunni insurgents and al Qaeda—into a potentially huge defeat for Tehran. Barring a strike by President Bush against Iran's nuclear sites before January 2009, Iraq is the only arena where the administration is capable of moving effectively against Tehran.

The Iranians have seriously overplayed their hand along the Tigris and Euphrates. In their love of the Hezbollah model, they have helped to build up Moktada al-Sadr, the scion of Iraq's most revered clerical family, who became a Shiite street hero for his defense of the Shia against Sunni insurgents and al Qaeda. Sadr's followers include the only Shiites willing and able to kill Americans—another hugely attractive factor to the leadership in Tehran, since wounding America in Iraq is as indispensable to the ruling elite's sense of purpose as raining Katyushas down on Israelis.

Yet Sadr's men are a hypercharged mix of Arabism and Islamism; as a rule, they are not terribly fond of Persians. They were inevitably going to clash with the followers of Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim, the leader of the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council (SIIC), a group founded in Tehran and which has maintained deep ties to many in Iran's religious establishment. The Sadrs and Hakims dislike each other. In the streets of Qom, Iran's most prestigious seat of clerical education, the representatives of the Sadr and Hakim families often throw shoes at each other. (Among clerics that is very bad.) Tehran should have known that it couldn't back both the Sadrists and the SIIC.

Although conscious of the fleeting loyalty of Iraqi Shiites who once took refuge in Iran from the wrath of Saddam Hussein and are now blessed with ever-larger Iraqi oil revenues, Tehran probably didn't anticipate how quickly Shiite sentiment in Iraq could change. The Iranians didn't see the rapid rise of the Iranian-born Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who has become the most popular ayatollah in Iran as well as the most powerful cleric in Iraq. Iranian and Iraqi clerical ties are old, complicated, intensely personal, and often quite affectionate—all of which now plays powerfully against the Iranian ruling elite's cynical politics in Mesopotamia.

It is a very good bet that Sistani and other prominent Iraqi clerics have remonstrated vociferously with their Iranian interlocutors in Qom against Iranian-fed violence among Iraqi Shiites. We can see the Iranian side of this in former president Mohammad Khatami's accusing Khamenei virtually by name of spilling Shiite blood in Iraq and turning Iran's Islamic revolutionary message into a call for violence and upheaval beyond its borders. Khatami's recent speech at Gilan University is an astonishing sermon from a man not known for boldness.

In the time remaining to it, the Bush administration should do all it can to reinforce this Shiite dissent and outrage. The surge aside, it is the most effective vehicle for checking Iran in Iraq and stabilizing Iraqi politics. The U.S. government should broadcast as loudly as possible any and all information showing Tehran's complicity in the death of Iraqi Shiites. If the United States can again arrest members of the Revolutionary Guards Corps inside Iraq, it should do so, interrogate them rigorously, and make the information public. The tide may have turned for good against Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, with potentially huge ramifications for hearts and minds throughout the Sunni Arab world. The clerics in Tehran could be dealt out of the inner circles of Iraqi Shia politics. With continued progress in Iraq, the next administration would be in a position to turn its full attention to thwarting Iran elsewhere in the region—and to preventing the mullahs from acquiring nuclear weapons.

—Reuel Marc Gerecht, for the Editors

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The price at the pump

Where does your gasoline dollar go?

In 2007, the industry earned 8.3 cents on each dollar of sales.**

* U.S. Department of Energy data for March 2008
** API calculation based on the *Oil Daily*

According to the Federal Trade Commission, the global price of crude oil is the single most important factor in what you pay for fuel at the pump. Since 1992, America's oil and natural gas industry has invested $1.25 trillion in exploration, development, production and distribution of oil and natural gas.

To learn more about fuel prices, what the oil and natural gas industry is doing and what you can do, visit EnergyTomorrow.org.

EnergyTomorrow.org

THE *people* OF AMERICA'S OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

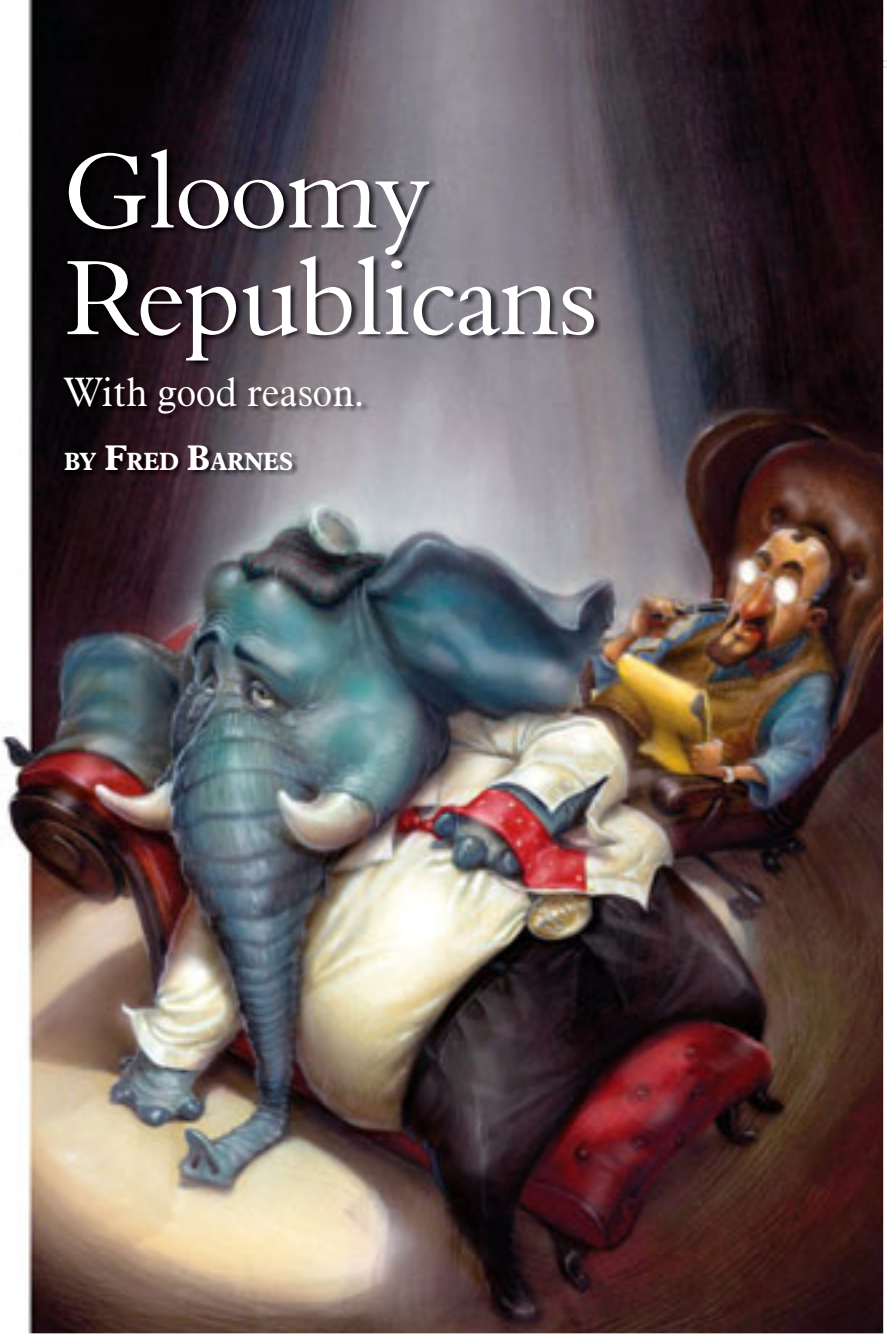
© 2008 API

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gloomy Republicans

With good reason.

BY FRED BARNES



GARY LOCKE

First, the good news. Conservatives won a sweeping victory in an enormously important election the week before last. Unfortunately, it happened in England, where Boris Johnson won the race for mayor of London and Conservatives trounced Labour all across the country. Now, the bad news. Prospects for Republicans in the 2008 election here at home look grim. The political environment isn't as bad as it was in 2006 when Republicans lost both houses of Congress and a lot more. But it's close.

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

The empirical evidence is well known. More than 80 percent of Americans believe the nation is heading in the wrong direction. Democrats have steadily maintained the 10 percentage point lead in voter preference they gained two years ago. And President Bush's job performance rating is stuck in the low 30s, a level of unpopularity that weakens the Republican case for holding the White House in 2008.

There's another piece of polling data that is both intriguing and indicative. In a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC survey last month, John McCain fared better with Republican voters (84 percent to 8 percent) than Barack Obama did with Democrats (78 percent to 12 percent). McCain was also stronger than Obama among independent voters (46 percent to 35 percent).

These are terrific numbers for McCain. But they aren't enough. In the overall match-up, McCain trailed Obama (43 percent to 46 percent). The explanation for this seeming paradox is quite simple: The Republican base has shrunk. In 2008, there are fewer Republicans.

"It's the erosion in party affiliation that's pulling McCain down," says a Republican strategist, and it could doom his chances of winning the presidency. The strategist fears Republican leaders and McCain campaign officials "don't realize the trouble they're going to be in."

There have been some improvements in political atmospherics for Republicans. The 2006 midterm election was framed by intense voter dissatisfaction with the war in Iraq. The 2008 election won't be. The surge of American troops in Iraq hasn't turned the war into a Republican asset, but it's at least blunted it as an effective Democratic talking point.

With scandal after scandal involving House Republicans in 2006, the party became the target of voter fury. Now Democrats control Congress. "The anger against congressional Republicans isn't there," says Republican congressman Tom Davis of Virginia, who is retiring.

Davis, however, thinks Republicans have made little headway in improving their tarnished image. House minority leader John Boehner talks about fixing the Republican "brand." Davis's assessment: "We haven't done anything the last year and a half to re-do the brand." Instead, Republicans have focused on "looking out for the president."

Pollster Frank Luntz, a sharp critic of Boehner's leadership, believes the Republican image has gotten worse. "It used to be that Republicans won [in polls] on economic and values and foreign policy issues," he says. "Democrats won on quality of life. Now Democrats are winning on everything."

The worst news for Republicans in recent weeks has been the capture by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Democrats of two Republican House seats in special elections in Illinois and Louisiana. Poorly chosen candidates were responsible for the defeats, Republicans insist. Maybe, but success in special elections usually foreshadows success in the next general election. This was precisely what happened in the months before the 1994 Republican landslide when Republicans won Democratic seats in special elections.

"These special elections are not indicative of what's going to happen this fall," argues House Republican whip Roy Blunt. "I'm not saying they're helpful." He notes that John McCain and Barack Obama weren't the likely presidential nominees six months ago, so the political environment may change in the six months before Election Day. If it does, it's not likely to change much.

Democrats regard the unexpected victories in Republican territory as one more indication of a coming landslide. "There's never been a better climate, since 1932, for Democrats," says Bob Beckel, a Democratic consultant. "And the political environment usually prevails. It's impossible for me to conclude anything other than it's going to be a Democratic year."

Beckel cites, in particular, a huge increase in Democratic voters in 2008 that has widened the party's advantage in registration by millions of voters. "Republicans are facing a surge in new Democratic voters, and they are facing defections in a number of states," he says.

Indeed they are, which is why Republican expectations for 2008 are modest. There are three major goals: Hold the White House, avert sweeping House losses, and keep the Senate defeats to four or fewer.

McCain must overcome a "generic" presidential preference for a Democratic president of 51 percent to 33 percent (in the *WSJ*/NBC poll). He'll have to appeal more strongly than Obama to independents, moderates, and soft Democrats. The good news for McCain is that 20 percent of Clinton supporters in primary exit polls and other surveys say they'll vote for him over Obama.

In the House, Republicans want to stay within close range of Democrats, who currently have a 36-seat majority. Republicans hold 199 seats. The generic advantage for a Democratic House is 49 percent to 34 percent (again in the *WSJ*/NBC poll), which shows the headwind Republicans are running against. If the next president is a Democrat, Republicans figure they'll have a chance to win control of the House in 2010, so long as losses this year don't put them too far behind.

Republicans need a minimum of 45 senators to pursue a filibuster strategy and block or alter Democratic legislation. They currently hold 49 Senate seats, but at least 7 of those are in jeopardy this year. Only 41 votes are required for a successful filibuster, but a few Republicans always defect—thus the need for 45.

If the Conservative triumph in Britain last month has any relevance for America, Republicans shouldn't get their hopes up in 2008. It took Conservatives 11 years to recover from their landslide loss to Labour in 1997. The Republican recovery—what there is of one—is less than two years old. ♦

The War Over the War (cont.)

What the G.I. Bill debate is really about.

BY REIHAN SALAM

There's the war in Iraq and then there is the war over the war in Iraq. The first is about gaining ground against the sectarian militias and terrorists who plague that country. The second is about storytelling.

Advocates of staying and fighting in Iraq are at a distinct disadvantage in the second war. The burden of the Iraq fighting falls on such a small number of military families that it is easy to portray the troops in the field as victims. This has proved an effective strategy for Virginia's junior senator, Jim Webb, a staunch opponent of the surge. Once seen as an irascible loose cannon, he has used his experience in the Pentagon—he served as Ronald Reagan's assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs and had a brief, controversial stint as secretary of the Navy—to mount a disciplined attack on the Bush administration's personnel policy, what you might call the soft underbelly of the surge.

Politically speaking, advocates of withdrawal are in a bind. Though all depends on how the question is asked, a CNN poll conducted in late April found that only a third of Americans say they want all U.S. troops out of Iraq immediately. Another third want to withdraw some troops, and a fifth want troop levels to stay where they are. Despite the general unpopularity of the Iraq war, Cindy Sheehan-esque calls for bugging out aren't popular.

In 2007, Democrats failed in efforts to pull the plug on the war by denying the military the funds it needs to keep the troops on the battlefield. This is where Webb has proven adept. Rather than try to bring the troops home directly, Webb has focused on an advocacy campaign for the troops. And if that means we can't sustain U.S. efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, so be it.

Last year, Webb sponsored an

Reihan Salam is an editor at the Atlantic Monthly *and a fellow at the New America Foundation. With Ross Douthat, he is the author of* Grand New Party, *to be published by Doubleday in June.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

amendment that aimed to give troops more "dwell time" between deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, especially a minimum of three years for National Guard and Reserve units. The measure had an obvious appeal as the strains of increased deployments have pushed many military families to the breaking point. But, as Webb surely understood, it also would have made the surge strategy impossible. At the last minute, Webb lost a key ally, Senator John Warner, and the measure died.

This year, Webb has built a broad coalition around his generous "Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act," designed to dramatically increase G.I. educational benefits. All told, the measure has 56 cosponsors, including Senate Republicans like Warner and Chuck Hagel and Richard Lugar. By including the measure in its $195 billion emergency war-funding package, the Democratic congressional leadership has all but dared the White House to veto it.

The case for Webb's proposal is rooted in the extraordinary success of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the G.I. Bill of Rights. Because men who managed to avoid the draft had made economic progress over the war years, there was a fear that veterans would have a hard time catching up—and that resentment would build. The G.I. Bill offered a generous educational benefit that gave millions of veterans a foothold in the middle class and sparked a dramatic expansion of American higher education. At the time, the benefit was more than enough to cover the then-modest cost of a college education. The military emerged as an engine of opportunity.

Webb emphasizes that veterans' educational benefits haven't kept up with the increases in the costs of higher education, particularly when it comes to elite public and private colleges.

But it's also true that we've had an all-volunteer force for decades. Whereas the original G.I. Bill was understood as compensation for conscription—for taking the best years of millions of young lives—later versions of the legislation, including the 1985 Montgomery G.I. Bill that is the basis of current educational benefit, have served as a relatively small part of a broader incentive package for serving in the armed forces. Signing bonuses and reenlistment bonuses are what have skyrocketed post-9/11, and servicemen are free to use this bonus money as they choose—a down payment on a house, to start a business, to finance their education.

Webb's proposal, though, goes well beyond even the most generous enlistment bonuses, provided the money is spent on education. Right now, active-duty veterans can receive up to $1,101 a month, an amount that is not quite adequate for room and board at the average in-state public school, let alone the most expensive. Webb would raise monthly benefits to match the most expensive in-state public school tuition and also provide a housing allowance at the military's E-5 standard—generally understood to be enough to rent a two-bedroom townhouse.

The sponsors claim that the new approach will cost around $2 billion a year, a small share of the total cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a small price to pay for doing right by veterans. The more pressing concern is what effect the proposed legislation will have on our ability to sustain a long military campaign. In Webb's bill, the maximum benefit kicks in after 36 months of active duty. Assuming a large number of new recruits are drawn to service on the basis of the new benefit, which seems to be Webb's intent, keeping them in the ranks will require far higher reenlistment bonuses, according to a study sponsored by the Department of Defense.

As Webb told Military.com's Tom Philpott in March, the military relies heavily on "this one demographic group they keep pounding on and throwing money at. Yet there's a whole different demographic group that would be attracted to coming in and serving a term." He is right that the military leadership has a strong preference for a career force rather than a force defined by high rates of turnover, for the same reason that virtually all employers prefer experienced employees.

Last week, Senators Lindsey Graham, Richard Burr, and John McCain, taking a cue from Defense Department objections, introduced an alternative bill, which increases monthly G.I. educational benefits to $1,500 per month. For those who serve in active duty for 12 years or more, the benefit increases to $2,000 a month. The Graham-Burr-McCain bill also allows servicemen to transfer education benefits to a spouse or to children. Half of benefits can be transferred after 6 years of service and all benefits can be transferred after 12 years. Webb is strongly opposed to transferability—perhaps because transferability is a way of turning spouses and children into reenlistment recruiters. Military families, as you can guess, like the idea.

Overall, the Graham-Burr-McCain approach seems more likely to yield an effective fighting force composed of women and men interested in making a long-term commitment. The Webb bill, in contrast, could lead to more college-bound Americans signing up, but it will also probably mean a higher number will leave the military once they reach the maximum benefit level. It's no surprise that McCain, who has a shot at being commander in chief, would rather not see reenlistment rates plummet. Webb, in contrast, who is always fighting the war over the war, is far less likely to have a philosophical objection to making wars like our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan far more expensive to fight.

This relatively minor legislative battle over whether and how the military should try to bring together Americans of different class backgrounds is really a major battle in the war over the war in Iraq. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Job Isn't Senator-in-Chief

Obama and McCain need to be ready on day one.

BY LAWRENCE B. LINDSEY

Eight months from now America will have its first president in nearly five decades with zero executive branch experience at the federal or state level. The shock to the new occupant of the Oval Office will be profound. Within a matter of weeks he will have to fill about 1,500 jobs and propose a legislative agenda all the while dealing with foreign adversaries who will seek advantage in a period of transition between administrations. Then, after a brief honeymoon—six weeks for McCain, six months for Obama—the press will turn relentlessly hostile.

Neither man is prepared, indeed no one can be fully prepared. But both are now running campaigns for an office that more closely resembles that of Senator of the United States than President of the United States. For the good of the country the sooner this changes the better. Both need to lay the groundwork for governing. The easiest place to start by far is with a legislative agenda.

Consider something obvious and unavoidable like taxes. McCain will "keep the Bush tax cuts." Obama will get rid of them. Trouble is, McCain can't "keep the Bush tax cuts"; they expire, so merely saying you're going to keep them is hardly an act of economic leadership. Obama will get "change" on taxes simply through inertia; no leadership needed. But guidance would be useful. For example, inertia would take the top rate on capital gains back to 20 percent. Obama had said he wants it "no higher than when Ronald Reagan was president," which means 28 percent. But his advisers publicly said 25 percent and in a recent interview on *Fox News Sunday* he dodged and weaved on the subject of rates.

By contrast, he did not bob and weave around a much bigger tax increase—lifting the cap that limits the income on which Social Security taxes are paid and benefits calculated. That would add 12.4 percentage points of tax to every person making over roughly $100,000. How does that square with not raising taxes on middle income families? Nor did he say what he would do about changing the formula that links benefits to taxes paid. Would Social Security stay a contributory system or become just a welfare scheme? The generally fawning press hasn't asked these tough questions. If it doesn't, the country will just have to find out what is behind the proverbial "Door Number One" after the election.

Both men say they want "cap and trade" systems for carbon emissions. It would be generous to call what their campaigns have put out on this even "works in progress." But any scheme that actually reduces emissions must be a net tax hike on end users like drivers and homeowners with electric bills. How is this not a tax hike on middle income Americans? Both men have proposed radically different health care concepts, but again, the specifics are missing on how either would save money rather than raise the nation's health care bill. The list goes on.

All of this is fine if one wants a senator. Once elected, that man will accomplish about as much as the Senate accomplishes on its own volition. To be a successful president, though,

Lawrence B. Lindsey is the author of What a President Should Know . . . but Most Learn Too Late *(Rowman and Littlefield).*

The only universal optical instrument...

PANSCOPE

(the complete optical system)

from us only $59.95

(Why pay more?) *

*BUT READ THIS MESSAGE FOR AN EVEN MUCH BETTER DEAL.

• PANSCOPE is beautifully gift-boxed, comes with its neatly fitted leather case and with a plastic "tripod" for extended observations at 15x and 30x.

This is a little optical marvel. PANSCOPE (only 2" long) contains a complete optical system in its tiny body. You may use it as a 3x telescope or as a unique 3x telescope-loupe. In its magnifying mode, it delivers magnifiers and loupes at 5x, 10x, and 15x enlargement. And to top it all, it also functions as a 30x microscope of laboratory quality.

A special stand for long-term observation for 15x and 30x microscope is included. PANSCOPE is the indispensable first choice of scientists and professionals and of just about everybody who wants and needs to see the infinite detail in life that is not readily available to the unaided eye.

*And here is the even better deal: Buy two PANSCOPES for $119.90 and we shall send you a third one, with our compliments -- absolutely FREE! You will be delighted with this wonderful instrument. Do yourself a favor and order your PANSCOPE(s) today!

How to order

You may order by toll-free phone, mail or by fax and pay by check or AmEx/Visa/ MasterCard. Please give order code shown below. Add $6.95 for one, $9.90 for three instruments for shipping/ insurance- and sales tax for CA delivery. You have thirty-days refund and three-year warranty. We do not refund postage. For customer service or wholesale information please call (415) 356-7801.

Please give order code Y950.

jomira

division of jomira/advance

470 3rd St., #211, San Francisco, CA 94107

Order by toll-free phone: 1-800/600-2777, or (fastest!) by fax: 1-415/356-7804.
Visit our website at www.jomira.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a candidate must make up his mind before he is elected.

One need only look at the two terms of Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton to get a sense of the difference running on a legislative agenda can make. In 2000 Bush laid out very specific proposals on tax cuts, defense spending increases, education reform, a prescription drug benefit, and personal accounts for Social Security. Four of those five got enacted despite the lack of a convincing election win and lack of control of the Senate. Sure, compromises were made, but the essential ingredients of each campaign proposal were enacted. In addition, the campaign had produced a detailed agenda on dozens of issues that guided executive branch decision-making in the first term.

By contrast, in 2004 Bush did not run on any specific legislative programs. The issue was staying in Iraq. He received a mandate to do so and carried it out. But Social Security reform was revived as an afterthought in early 2005 and went nowhere. Immigration reform was invented on the fly and died on the vine. There were no significant legislative accomplishments in the second term despite a three million vote win and solid control of both houses of Congress.

Saying what you're going to do in specific fashion is not only good government, it is also good politics. A solid record of legislative accomplishment gained Republicans seats in 2002 and 2004 and gave Bush a reelection victory despite the Iraq war and a recovering but hardly robust economy. The lack of an agenda in 2005 and 2006 helped cost the Republicans the Congress in the midterms and send the president's popularity to new depths.

A similar tale can be told of Clinton. The two specific items Bill Clinton ran on in 1992 were a tax increase and ratification of NAFTA, the latter setting him up as a new style of Democrat. Both passed. He also ran on one very nonspecific item: health care reform. The details were left vague for reasons of political expediency. It was widely perceived in the press that Clinton had won a mandate for reform, but the absence of details on which he could claim a mandate doomed the process. What we now remember as HillaryCare collapsed despite solid majorities for the Democrats in both houses of Congress.

Specificity is not only good government and good politics, it is the only way to run a government. The new president and his appointees will not have time to thrash out details after January 20. They will be far too busy just governing. As busy as a presidential campaign may seem, it only gets worse after you are elected. Develop specifics now, gentlemen, or expect either no program or a highly flawed one to be your legacy.

The second item the candidates can control to some extent is personnel. This does not mean handing out cabinet posts, as the popular imagination would have it. It means deciding who speaks authoritatively for the president-want-to-be. Neither a candidate nor a president can possibly have detailed knowledge of all the things about which he is expected to hold an opinion. Nor frankly could a press secretary. There are a whole host of economic, foreign policy, and legal and domestic policy matters that someone should be able to discuss on a detailed background level with the more expert parts of the media, business, and foreign policy establishments. Communication is essential to governing. Done right, it also creates the impression of a government in waiting.

Neither Obama nor McCain has had any success in this regard. Both campaigns resemble senatorial offices with plenty of "aides" with whom one can speak, but no single person except for the senator who can actually provide an authoritative answer.

Finally, both candidates should realize that their current behavior is shaping the foreign policy crises they will confront in their first year as president. The transition period is always a period of opportunity for adversaries. This would be especially the case for President Obama whose post-superpower One World image is sure to be tested. The most prominent flaps of his campaign (besides Reverend Jeremiah Wright) have involved spokesmen whispering to foreigners out of school. One was to tell the Canadians that Obama's anti-trade rhetoric was for domestic consumption. The other involved a signal that Obama really does plan to stay in Iraq and knows the consequences of a pullout. Indeed a pro-American Arab ambassador told me specifically that the Obama campaign had made the same Iraqi assurances to him.

This suggests that an Obama administration is an accident waiting to happen. If Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Hugo Chávez, and Kim Jong-Il are watching Obama's public statements on CNN and preparing for their face-to-face meetings in the Oval Office, but their neighbors who are our allies are being told something else, then conflict caused by miscalculation is inevitable.

McCain's tough guy image creates less opportunity for miscalculation, but does invite mischief. On a recent trip to Japan, I was struck by the widespread view that China will become far more assertive late this year and early next as both America and Japan go through political transitions. Even the son of the former commander of the Pacific Fleet is going to be tested by the Chinese to see how far he is prepared to go to defend America's dominance in the region, and there will be no better time to do it than when he is still settling in.

To be fair, our electoral process does not make it easy for candidates to act like grown-ups. Pandering and endless talk about really trivial issues is what both the media and the public expect. That is why candidates must go out of their way to plan ahead: create detailed agendas that provide clarity about legislative intentions, designate spokesmen who can gather information and lay the groundwork for governing and quietly clarify the ambiguities the candidate creates, and recognize that the things you say now about foreign policy matters are driving policy decisions in capitals around the world. Gentlemen, in eight months one of you will no longer be a senator but the leader of the free world. Act like it. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We're All Gun Nuts Now

The Democrats sidle up to the Second Amendment. BY JOHN MCCORMACK

During a campaign debate on April 16, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton were asked if the District of Columbia's ban on gun possession, now facing a challenge before the Supreme Court, is constitutional. "I think a total ban, with no exceptions under any circumstances, might be found by the Court not to be. But I don't know the facts," said Clinton (Yale Law '73), dodging the question for the third and final time. Obama (Harvard Law '91) also pleaded ignorance, confessing he hadn't "listened to the briefs and looked at all the evidence."

When moderator Charlie Gibson pointed out that Obama's handwriting was on a 1996 candidate survey that said he favored banning handguns, Obama flatly denied his writing was on the questionnaire, contradicting what a campaign staffer had told *Politico* weeks earlier. Asked if he still supports licensing and registering guns, Obama said he favors "common-sense approaches" to gun control like keeping guns from "the mentally deranged." When Clinton was asked if she maintains her past support for licensing and registration, she too sidestepped the question, saying, "What might work in New York City is certainly not going to work in Montana."

With both contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination evading the gun control issue as if it were sniper fire, you couldn't blame gun control advocates for feeling bitter. Yet Paul Helmke, president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence—the pro-gun control counterweight to the National Rifle Association—says Obama and Clinton are "coming fairly close to delivering the message we'd like." On licensing and registering guns, Helmke says, they are "being realistic" in recognizing "there's no support for pushing that forward at this stage." His thoughts on the candidates' ducking questions on the D.C.

John McCormack, a Collegiate Network fellow, is an editorial assistant at THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

"How little we know, how eager to learn"

That's our motto. And we're hiring.

A large, fast-growing global foundation determined to change the way philanthropy is done. A mandate to ask the Big Questions in fields ranging from cosmology and evolutionary biology to the nature of the human spirit and enterprise solutions to poverty. We're the John Templeton Foundation—and we're looking for talented colleagues who can help us fund cutting-edge interdisciplinary research and engage the world's most promising scholars and scientists. Join us. It may just be your dream job.

Extraordinary openings for extraordinary candidates.

Vice Presidents in the following fields (each with an annual portfolio of approximately $10 million in grantmaking): Physical and Mathematical Sciences • Bio/Neurosciences • Philosophy, Theology, and Related Scholarship Engaged with Science • Virtue Research and Character Development • Research on Freedom and Enterprise Solutions to Poverty • Medicine, Spirituality, and Human Flourishing

Other key positions: Vice President for Evaluation • Director of Publications • Director, Templeton Prize • Executive Editor, Templeton Press

TO LEARN MORE, PLEASE VISIT
WWW.TEMPLETONCAREERS.ORG

JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION
SUPPORTING SCIENCE~INVESTING IN THE BIG QUESTIONS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gun ban? "They're politicians, and most politicians on tough calls do not answer."

The reason Helmke doesn't feel abandoned on licensing, registration, and the D.C. gun ban is that the Brady Campaign has shelved those goals, in favor of a more modest, incrementalist strategy. Though licensing and registration remain official Brady Campaign policy, Helmke says he hasn't even talked about them with anyone on staff since he became president in 2006.

In 2007, Helmke called the appeals court decision striking down the District's gun ban "judicial activism at its worst," but now he gives the impression he wouldn't mind losing the case in the Supreme Court. A loss "could be good politically for the gun control movement and these candidates," he says. "If folks know the Supreme Court's not going to allow anybody to confiscate their guns, then background checks really shouldn't be something you oppose."

Indeed, a loss could create an opening to advance what Helmke calls "middle of the road" issues. He expects both Obama and Clinton to pursue the Brady Campaign's top three legislative priorities: closing the gun show loophole, expanding access to gun trace data, and banning "assault weapons."

Like Obama and Clinton, McCain favors closing the "gun show loophole," which allows private individuals, unlike licensed gun dealers, to sell their guns without performing background checks. This has a decent chance of becoming law in the next couple of years.

It's doubtful the Brady Campaign's other two goals—which McCain opposes—could make it through Congress. The debate over gun trace data centers on who should have access to reports showing where guns used in crimes were bought and sold. Only law enforcement agents currently have access to this information, but the Brady Campaign wants to make it public. Helmke says this would help local politicians crack down on unscrupulous gun dealers. It would also help pro-gun control mayors like Michael Bloomberg sue gun dealers and manufacturers. An attempt in 2007 to repeal the federal restrictions on gun trace data failed in a House Appropriations Committee vote 26 to 40.

As for "assault weapons," a 10-year federal ban was enacted in 1994, when support for gun control was stronger on Capitol Hill. Even so, the ban squeaked through the House, by 216 to 214. It limited ammunition clips to 10 rounds and banned 19 semi-automatic weapons by name, as well as any semi-automatic weapon with a combination of features, such as a rifle scope and pistol grip. (Fully automatic weapons have been restricted since 1934 and off the public market since 1986 unless manufactured before that date.) Before the assault weapons ban expired in 2004, an amendment to extend it for 10 years passed the Senate 52 to 47, but the underlying bill was defeated, and in the House it was never even brought to a vote.

Whether the Democrats bring the assault weapons ban up for a vote depends on their willingness to risk their majority, which they secured partly by running candidates like senators Jim Webb of Virginia and Jon Tester of Montana who have "A" ratings from the National Rifle Association. Yet Helmke isn't upset with the Democrats. "A political party's job is to get their people elected to office," he says.

Democrats have run away from gun control because they think it's a major reason they lost swing states in the last two presidential elections. As Democratic congressman Barney Frank said in 2001, "Unlike gay rights, environment, and choice . . . Democrats were disappointed when a pro-gun control bloc did not appear." "If it weren't for guns, President-elect Kerry might now be conferring with incoming Senate Majority Leader Daschle," wrote *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof in November 2004. "[G]un control is dead."

Polls show how gun control became a losing issue for Democrats. In 1990, Gallup reported that 78 percent of Americans supported "more strict" gun laws, but only 49 percent did so in a Gallup/*USA Today* poll this February. More revealing is a Gallup survey from October 2007 that asked if government should "enforce the current gun laws more strictly and NOT pass new gun laws, or pass new gun laws in addition to enforcing the current laws more strictly." Enforcement without passing new laws was favored 58 percent to 38 percent.

Between 2000 and 2006, Democrats ditched a number of pro-gun control candidates, and NRA endorsements of Democratic candidates for Congress jumped from 38 to 68, according to an NRA spokesman. In the summer of 2006, Helmke, a former mayor of Ft. Wayne, Indiana, and Republican Senate candidate, says he was hired in part to usher in a "somewhat more moderate and common sense" approach to gun control.

While he doesn't think gun control sank Al Gore and John Kerry, Helmke sees that the gun control movement has been beaten back politically and legislatively. In the past 10 years, only one federal gun control law has been enacted, and it passed with the support of the NRA: a measure that provides money to induce state governments to report background check data to the federal government.

Helmke describes the Brady Campaign's present situation with a football analogy. "The other side had marched the ball down on the 2 yard line . . . but now we got the ball back. The bad news is we've got 98 yards to go," he says. "You don't throw the Hail Mary pass. . . . You've got three downs to get a first down."

Sounds like a game plan. But first the Brady Campaign will need Obama or Clinton to pull off a few trick plays to keep that record on guns well out of sight and win the election in November. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Captain Nicholas Howard of the 101st Airborne speaks to village elders during a patrol in the Tani district on April 16, 2008.

AP / RAFIQ MAQBOOL

A Counterinsurgency Grows in Khost

An unheralded U.S. success in Afghanistan

By Ann Marlowe

While news reports like to speak of a "resurgent Taliban" in Afghanistan, in the 14 provinces that make up Regional Command East in Afghanistan they are a defeated military force. Not only do the Taliban refuse to engage American forces directly, they have not won an engagement with the Afghan National Army in a year. Even the unimpressive Afghan National Police have lately been winning battles with the insurgents.

RC-East is one of five regional commands in the NATO-led military and development mission in Afghanistan, and the only one under U.S. command. Colonel Marty Schweitzer of the 82nd Airborne Division has just finished a 15-month deployment commanding coalition forces in six provinces in eastern Afghanistan. Here on the eastern border and in the north of the country, the insurgency is largely a matter of IEDs and VBIEDs (Vehicle Born Improvised Explosion Devices), with the occasional suicide bomber. The counterinsurgency is what's resurgent. The rugged terrain Schweitzer was responsible for shares a long border with Pakistan and is inhabited by 4.9 million Afghans, mostly poor and illiterate Pashtuns. But U.S. forces have made great progress in these six provinces. While only 22 of the 86 districts supported the government in early 2007 when Schweitzer took command and 58 at the end of 2007, 72 support it today. In the six eastern provinces, there were 3,400 Afghan National Security Forces in early of 2007; there are now 12,450. And all of this has been at the cost of only 11 civilian casualties in Schweitzer's six provinces.

Ann Marlowe is a New York-based writer who just finished her third embed with U.S. forces in Afghanistan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The crown jewel in the American counterinsurgency is Khost province. Here Lieutenant Colonel Scottie D. Custer pioneered an innovative strategy that Schweitzer quickly copied in other provinces. Custer was Khost's maneuver commander. Each province under American protection has a maneuver commander and a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) commander. Maneuver commanders are in charge of making war, while PRT commanders do development work—though the maneuver commanders have special funds for their own development projects.

Khost province is about the size of the Bay Area and has a similar population, around one million. The province was created when the Communist Afghan government tried to rationalize its territory. In 1979 Paktika was carved out of what had been parts of Ghazni and Paktia; six years later the easternmost section of Paktika became Khost. The new province's borders followed the tribal boundaries, and there's no sense that it's an artificial entity.

Khost was in most ways unpromising terrain for developing a successful counterinsurgency. The province had never seen the benefits of what few government services Afghanistan offered before the civil war, and as many as 200,000 Khostis have voted with their feet, emigrating to Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and other emirates. They send $6 to $12 million a year back to their families. This is the major source of income for the province, along with agriculture and the logging of the once-plentiful mountain forests. (Opium isn't grown here.)

Khost has a backwoods, archaic flavor. There is no municipal power supply in the province. This isn't unusual in Afghanistan, but while people in more prosperous areas have diesel generators, few Khostis do. Televisions are rare, and American soldiers have distributed thousands of hand-cranked radios in the province. Education was limited to the rote memorization of prayers in rural villages until the last year or so. A five-year plan that aims for 60 percent literacy in the province is very ambitious.

It's hard to overestimate the isolation of the rural people here. Some Khostis living in remote upland villages are only now encountering Americans for the first time. I saw kids who had never learned to play catch, and heard of families of midgets, some of whom are police officers. So it is doubly impressive that Khost has made great civil and economic strides in the last couple of years.

"I am convinced that the cause of instability in Afghanistan is poor governance," says Colonel Schweitzer. "Everything else is a symptom. A year ago, Khost was the most unstable of my six provinces. Today it is the most stable. Why? The governor, Arsala Jamal, and the 10 of the 12 subgovernors who get it." But it also wouldn't have been possible without Scottie Custer.

TANGIBLE BENEFITS

In early 2007, Custer, 43, developed a plan to meet the insurgency at the most local level. He decided to disperse his 187 paratroopers throughout the province, stationing 20 to 30 men in Force Protection Facilities (FPFs) in each of Khost's district centers. Living next door to a subgovernor's offices, they could protect him and his officials. (Subgovernors are like county executives in the United States. Appointed by the provincial governors, they are typically responsible for districts of 60,000-100,000 people.) U.S. soldiers could also play on-the-spot mentor to the Afghan National Police, who continue to be a byword for inefficiency and corruption. Khost's Provincial Reconstruction Team—87 men and women from both the Army and State Department—would build schools and clinics near the FPFs, bringing the tangible benefits of government to Afghan citizens.

Custer looks Old Army, with a buzz cut that must require daily maintenance. He played hockey at West Point—"I was the first person in my family to go there since George Armstrong Custer"—and entered the artillery. He is obsessively attentive to detail, and young artillerymen gush about his expertise. Yet Custer is all New Army in his approach. He

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fifty new schools were built in 2007; 25 are planned for 2008. In 2002, there were 38,000 children in school in Khost province; 210,000 attend today—including 44,000 girls.

A school being built in the Jaji Maidan district in Khost.

U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY CHIEF PETTY OFFICER PATRICK FLYNN

learned the first names of all 619 of his paratroopers prior to deployment (last names are written on uniforms) and, when a disciplinary case is referred up to his level, will often spend an hour or two counseling the paratrooper.

In July 2007, I attended the opening of the first FPF, in Tani District, and have carefully followed Custer's counterinsurgency strategy since. I spent Thanksgiving with the paratroopers in Bak and visited the Sabari FPF as it approached completion. In March I stayed at the FPFs in Gurbuz, Mandozai, Sabari, Shamal, and Tani district centers, witnessing the gradual transition of command from Custer to his friend Lieutenant Colonel Dave Ell of the 101st Airborne. Ell's paratroopers will be spending the next 12 to 15 months in Khost, continuing to realize Custer's vision. "There's no reason to change a plan that's so successful," says Ell. (Colonel Schweitzer has just been replaced by Colonel Pete Johnson of the 101st.)

Custer's plan in all its messy, granular detail is an excellent example of how the Army is getting a handle on counterinsurgency. It is an archetype of how the United States is likely to find itself fighting in the decades to come. Not everything has worked as it's supposed to—the Army, typically, is more than willing to admit its mistakes—but it's amazing how so simple a plan has had so many synergistic effects. The progress in Khost is obvious.

Today, eight sturdy stone FPFs dot Khost—designed and built by Lieutenant Colonel Timothy Kohn, a brilliant reservist from Northern California. When I visited in March, only about 20 of Custer's 619 paratroopers were still living on Forward Operating Base Salerno; the rest were dispersed at the FPFs, which are all built to the same plan. They have 18-inch thick stone walls and sleeping quarters for officers and enlisted personnel. There's a rec room with a flat-panel television, sometimes a gym the residents built themselves, a kitchen, and spartan bathing facilities. (Each has its ups and downs: Sometimes the water pressure isn't good, or the toilets weren't installed correctly.) But FPFs are homier than the Salerno quarters, and six of the eight offer wi-fi, so paratroopers can more easily keep in touch with family. Morale is high, with the paratroopers referring to their FPF as "the house."

From the FPFs, Afghans have received a sense of security that has fostered commerce and civil society. A thriving bazaar/truck stop has sprung up around the Shamal FPF as long-distance truckers plying the Kabul-Khost highway quickly made it a practice to spend the night near the safety of the U.S. troops. There's a new gas station near the Tani FPF. The Mandozai FPF has a popular clinic attached. Hundreds of Afghans come each day to the district center to visit the offices of a subgovernor for help and to settle disputes: things that would once have been handled through tribal channels and bribes. All of this is helping to connect Afghans to their government—an important step in the fiercely independent, isolationist Pashtun belt.

The new roads also help. Just 15 miles of blacktop were laid here by U.S. troops between 2002 and 2007. In the last year, that number has reached 75 miles of road either completed or in the final stages of paving. For 2008, 85 miles of new asphalt are in the works—35 miles of local roads and 50 miles of a highway linking the province to Kabul. Discretionary funds in the hands of commanders like Custer have been committed to a 10-mile road that will link two towns, Zanbar and Yaqubi, in Khost's most volatile district, Sabari. Another 18-mile road connecting the remote district of Spera with Shamal has been approved. The goal is to connect every district in Khost (and indeed in all six of the provinces in Schweitzer's area) with the provincial capital, Khost City, by a main road.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There's a chicken-and-egg problem in Khost: Many families won't send girls to be taught by male teachers, but there are so few educated women in Khost that it is hard to find female teachers.

A U.S soldier hands out medicine in Khost as part of the Medical Civic Assistance Program.

U.S. DEPT. OF DEFENSE / SPC MICHAEL CARTER

USAID is also in the roadbuilding business in Khost. But while the Army's projects are a success story, USAID's constant delays and its insistence on gravel rather than asphalt have been a catastrophe. Custer says that he will write to the General Accounting Office about USAID and its contractors when he returns to the States. Governor Jamal, who is a huge proponent of asphalt roads, points out that Washington, D.C.-based Louis Berger Group, which has the USAID contract to build the Khost-Gardez Pass road in his territory, will use the same Afghan subcontractors the Army uses but at double the cost.

Fifty new schools were built in 2007; 25 are planned for 2008. While previous governors had focused on schools in the provincial capital, Khost City—a very common Afghan pattern—Governor Jamal, 43, has worked to put schools where there were none before. In 2002, there were 38,000 children in school in Khost; 210,000 attend today—including 44,000 girls. Female schooling is still a big issue in this deeply conservative province. There's a chicken-and-egg problem: Many families won't send girls to be taught by male teachers, but there are so few educated women in Khost that it is hard to find female teachers. This October the first 18 girls will graduate from high school in Khost; right now no women attend the local university, rated one of the five best in Afghanistan.

The biggest economic news is that a new commercial airport is being built—Khost's former airport having been taken over by the U.S. military. With the 200,000 Khostis living just a couple of hours away by air in the Gulf States, an airport is a natural for attracting investment. An industrial park is in the works as well, though this, like the airport, depends on an electrical grid being put up. This is also on the development schedule for 2008, along with a water system for Khost City.

According to Jamal, 12,000 new jobs were created in 2007 as a result of improved roads and security. Some business infrastructure has already sprung up thanks to Afghans' entrepreneurial instincts. The Kabul and Azizi banks opened Khost branches in the summer of 2006. Today the Azizi branch has $1.8 million in local deposits in 7,000 accounts, while Kabul has $4.2 million among 3,600 accounts. Local mullahs once condemned banking, even the sharia-compliant accounts both banks offer, but they have quieted down. "We bought clocks for the mosques," Kabul's manager Allah Nawaz Karwandgar explained, "and I am going to buy them some carpets." The silver lining to the hidebound traditionalism of places like Khost is the way money trumps ideology.

EXIT PLAN

The Army is also planning to turn two of the FPFs over to the Afghan National Army, who will in turn mentor the Afghan National Police until they can stand up on their own. As districts become firmly committed to the Afghan government, Afghan troops will replace Americans there, too. Custer refers to this as the "National Guard Plan," in which the Afghan army will be responsible for the province's security on an interim basis. Eventually, when the insurgent threat is sufficiently small, Afghan police will have full responsibility just as local police do in the United

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

States. The big and growing base at Salerno will be turned over to the Afghan army, and, presumably, U.S. troops will go home. The Afghans have a ways to go, but that time is imaginable here.

It's a goal that U.S. officers are working towards with remarkable skill. As Colonel Schweitzer says, "My 47 company commanders have more experience than battalion commanders did before 2001." Lieutenants and sergeants leading platoons often negotiate directly with Afghan officials and get to know shopkeepers and policemen in their patrol routes. They reel off statistics on public works projects and know which village elders are cooperative. They take an active role in mentoring subgovernors, and American officers have requested and received the replacement of subgovernors and police chiefs who proved incompetent or openly corrupt. (The police chief of Khost province is on the way out as a result of U.S. complaints.)

I met outstanding officers in Khost—smart, patient, imaginative problem solvers who worked 17 hours a day. "You should be able to run for mayor of your district and win," says Captain Derrick Hernandez, 31, a thoughtful Ohioan who just turned over command of five Khost districts to officers from the 101st Airborne. It helps to be a people person, with a great memory for faces and the ability to make small talk even through an interpreter. And you have to know when to use force, when to use persuasion, and when to be plain tricky.

SOFT POWER

'Here is the mullah. He will be joining us for lunch," Mandozai subgovernor Haji Doulat said in booming, accented English to the American officers who had come to see him. Doulat, 63, wearing a *shalwar kameez*, a beige vest, and a turban in a locally popular pattern—gray with black stripes—explained, "Governor Jamal invited him." The mullah, a small man of around 40, briefly looked up from running his fingers through his black prayer beads. Compared with the tall, charismatic Doulat and the powerfully built soldiers, he seemed insignificant in his dingy white *shalwar kameez*.

Lieutenant Colonel Custer widened his slate blue eyes. He and Jamal have a very close relationship. It was unusual for Jamal to spring a surprise on Custer. Why would he invite a stray mullah to a lunch meant to introduce Haji Doulat to the soldiers replacing Custer's men as they end their 15-month Afghan deployment? Custer asked Doulat the mullah's name. "Liwan Gul," he replied. Custer exchanged glances with Ell.

Major Dave Pierce, Custer's operations officer, quietly left Doulat's office. Liwan Gul continued caressing his prayer beads, having no idea that Pierce was putting in a call to what American troops refer to as Other Coalition Forces (OCF)—generally Rangers or Special Forces—to tell them that the man they were looking for had walked right into the trap set for him by the governor. (Custer could have taken Gul in with his own men, but U.S. troops are allowed to hold a suspect only 96 hours without formally charging him; OCF aren't bound by these restrictions.) Gul was wanted as an IED facilitator. In his public role as a mullah, Gul has also been a vocal opponent of girls' schools.

The Americans, Haji Doulat, and Liwan Gul sat down for a traditional lunch of rice, lamb, bread, salad, and fruit, augmented by takeout fried chicken and french fries from a fast food restaurant just five miles away in Khost City. Since the American presence in Khost has increased security and brought blacktop roads to the province, the provincial capital has experienced an economic boom, with six-story glass office buildings and more sophisticated stores opening—many financed with money from Khostis working overseas.

Midway through the meal, the mullah told Doulat that he wanted to leave to spend the rest of the day with his family. (Friday is the Afghan weekend.) Custer asked if he and Ell might have a word with the mullah outside. Everyone else adjourned to Doulat's office, furnished with chairs and sofas upholstered in strident earth tones, potentially hazardous low glass coffee tables, and a substantial wooden desk. Just before lunch, Custer had said that he and Governor Jamal considered Doulat the strongest of the 12 subgovernors of Khost, and the one most likely to take Jamal's place when, as expected, he moves on to a higher office in Kabul.

Mandozai had been prone to IEDs when Haji Doulat arrived in spring 2007, but has since improved greatly thanks to his forceful leadership and reputation for incorruptibility. His government salary is about $680 a month. This is quite a lot locally, four times a patrolman's salary and eight times a teacher's. But, as he points out, it doesn't cover the expenses that come with his position, like traveling around the district on roads that destroy his cars. But because his brother and sons run a successful contracting business, he doesn't need to take bribes.

The incoming American officers had already been briefed on the subgovernor; one point of the lunch was to massage Doulat's not inconsiderable ego and reward him for his competence and honesty. (Doulat would in turn later present Custer with a cobra-headed sword and a turban in a bright pink box.)

Outside, Custer and Ell had stalled Liwan Gul until the OCF arrived. The mullah was calm even after he was asked to get into a Humvee. He would not have struck Custer as a dangerous man if he hadn't known what he'd done. For Custer, though, the detention of Liwan Gul was an excellent example of the "soft power" that is the focus of American efforts in Khost.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Governor Jamal is five for five. He's brought in five bad guys like this—not a shot fired. That's why my men don't do hard knocks in Khost. They are counter to the counterinsurgency strategy we use. My men have been here 15 months and we haven't fired a shot in an organized firefight.

By working with Jamal, the subgovernors, and the police chiefs, Custer has secured Khost with fewer than 200 paratroopers. (He commands a total of 619 men, but these include his headquarters staff and 320 artillerymen and radar specialists dispersed throughout the six provinces.) The districts vary in their security. One good indicator, the tally of slain police officers, shows that 17 were murdered in Sabari during the 15 months of Custer's team's deployment. Eight were killed in neighboring Matun, which is on the Pakistani border, while one fell victim to insurgents in both Terezai and Gurbuz. IEDs and VBIEDs claimed all but three of these lives. But Schweitzer points out that you can't really generalize: "You really have to assess security village by village," he says.

Tani, chosen for the first FPF, is deemed the most secure district; the dominant local tribe is unified and, with a history of support for the Khalq Communist party in the 1980s, are progressive in the Afghan context. Communism in Afghanistan was often more a play for tribal or personal power than a matter of ideology, but in general former communists are more apt to support education.

Yet Tani was the site of a March 4 VBIED attack that took the life of an alert Afghan policeman who challenged the driver at the district center gate. The explosion was well planned, using a driver who had previously made legitimate supply deliveries to coalition forces. It also pointed to weaknesses in the American defenses, which depend on the Afghan police. The Americans failed to man the one guard tower that overlooked the main gate. Custer had pointed this out a couple of months before when he inspected the FPF, but blames himself for not following up with the NCO in charge. Just five Americans were at Tani at the time of the blast, and the highest rank was specialist.

'THE DREAD SABARI'

The day before the Tani attack, two U.S. paratroopers were killed and seven wounded in a VBIED attack in Sabari. The two Afghan National Policemen guarding the district center gate had mysteriously walked away to get food in the bazaar. A local contractor working on the almost-finished district center was, perhaps coincidentally, called away to his office in the bazaar. And a Turkish-born German jihadi driving a large truck detonated 1,000 pounds of explosives in the district center. The explosion was so powerful it was heard eight miles away. Al Jazeera released a Taliban tape of the explosion that shows a huge cloud rising from the shattered buildings. Again the correct guard tower wasn't manned—the penalty for stretching forces thin.

Custer was determined to learn from the tragedy and not bow to it. Less than a day after the explosion, Custer got approval from the theater commander, General David Rodriguez, to release $200,000 so that rebuilding could begin immediately. The new district center was slated to open within two months and the FPF a little later. The distance between the FPF and the gate is being increased in the reconstruction.

Captain Hernandez, soft-spoken but iron-willed, pooh poohs the mythology of what he calls "the dread Sabari." "If you give me a platoon of [Afghan National Police], I could pacify it." He notes that during Operation Matun—a joint U.S.-Afghan army mission that ran from Christmas Day to mid-January—they searched every house in Matun and Sabari on two separate occasions, and the people gradually warmed to the coalition forces. After the operation, 180 men from Matun volunteered to join the police. "They want security in their district too, they want to better their lives," Hernandez says. "The problem is, they didn't have any government there."

The Mandozai subgovernor, Haji Doulat, is a native of Sabari. He criticizes Sabari's subgovernor, Lotfullah Babaker Khel, and its police chief for failing to project authority in the district. The explosion was the last straw for the Americans. Subgovernor Lotfullah had been requesting a transfer when I met him in November. But on March 21, when I heard him complain to Custer that he was unable to be effective because he was a native of Sabari, Custer replied acidly, "People have to have the courage to come to the subgovernor with their problems—and the subgovernor has to have the courage to lead." Lotfullah is not only not getting a new district, he will be replaced by a stout, blustery former mujahedeen commander, Gul Qasim Jihadyar, now the subgovernor of Nadir Shah Kot. "In 2008, 80 percent of our effort will be focused on Sabari," says Custer. He's optimistic, and Ell is aware of the need for patience. As Schweitzer says, "If you offer them the benefits of government, they will take it every time. But on their timetable, not ours."

CHALLENGING TERRAIN

Army commanders fear that the remote district of Spera is used as an infiltration point from Pakistan, but Hernandez and Lieutenant Marc Laighton, 32, who patrols it weekly, view it as basically secure. There aren't IED attacks there, though there also aren't any roads to speak of in the mountain fastness. Hernandez hopes the incoming commander will be able to get to Spera twice a week, but the bone-jarring two-hour ride through the wadi each way is not a trip anyone relishes. The 18-mile

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Left to their own devices, people here would be living almost wholly as their ancestors did 2,000 years ago. Not surprisingly, this was termed the 'most unfriendly' village in Gurbuz by U.S. troops.

A Pashtun girl wanders through Spera, below; and a village in Gurbuz.

road that Custer has received approval to build should help.

Spera is rough terrain even by Afghan standards. Mud brick villages cling to the sides of a wadi that has too little water for the crops. A few pomegranate trees, pink blossomed, grow near the water. Some money trickles in from cutting the few trees remaining in the once thickly forested mountains. (Parts of Khost and neighboring Paktia are an ecological disaster in the making, with deforestation leading to erosion and a falling water table.)

Every child I see in Spera seems to be wearing his or her only set of clothes, and the garments of everyone but the elders are filthy. Yet the people are friendly with the troops here, friendlier than in some more prosperous districts. The Provincial Reconstruction Team just built Spera's first girls' school, which only runs up to grade three. (This seems to be the age—8 or 9—when most Khosti families get skittish about having their girls taught by male teachers.) There are seven schools for boys. They, and the 30 policemen stationed around the district center, are the visible accomplishments of the government here.

Spera is secure because its terrain is so challenging. While most of Khost lies in a bowl of river-watered flatlands with a moderate climate rare in Afghanistan, the edges of the province are rugged. Districts like Spera, Qalandar, and Musa Khel are so difficult to get to the enemy doesn't want them. Captain Hernandez, who is directly responsible for them, as well as four more accessible districts, says, "We go up there occasionally. You drag yourself in there, break three Humvees, and get airlifted out."As Kael Weston, the State Department's representative in Khost, notes, in Afghanistan, "the landscape has always won."

PHOTOS BY CAPTAIN DERRICK B. HERNANDEZ

THE WAY AHEAD

Lieutenant Colonel Ell's focus will be on coaching the Afghan National Police (ANP) and getting the Afghan army on board with "the National Guard concept." The Afghan soldiers will shortly move into their first FPFs, in Tani and Bak.

The ANP remain a sore point. Stories of its incompetence are rife among U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. While the Afghan army has made enormous progress in the last few years, the police are still a mixed bag. Some are courageous and professional, while others are thieves, extortionists, or rapists in uniform. An Afghan policeman was just shot dead by a woman in central Khost after he'd broken into her home and attempted to rape her.

Custer is milder than many of his subordinates when he describes the typical policeman: "You lie on a cot all day, and you lie on a cot all night, and when there's a boom you go out and see what it is. The concept of active patrolling is new to them." Many policemen won't patrol their assigned areas and certainly won't take on night missions without U.S. troops accompanying them.

If the rank and file are lazy and ill-trained, their superiors in the eastern region are far worse. "General Ayub, the Khost provincial chief of police, doesn't leave his office unless I get him a helicopter," notes Custer. "He has no idea what's going on out there. He has police uniforms stock-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

piled in his headquarters, but he's got men who are lucky not to be getting shot [by coalition forces] because they're not in uniform. When I got here, the ANP were getting fuel from the coalition. We put a stop to that—the Ministry of the Interior has a budget for them. They've got to get off the American teat."

In theory, the private military contractor Dyncorp is in charge of training the Afghan police in Khost and has a half-dozen highly paid police trainers based at Salerno, but, as Custer says, "they can't do any training if they won't leave the base." He likes to point to a line of armored SUVs sitting on a parking lot in Salerno—there to protect the Dyncorp trainers, should they ever muster the courage to leave the FOB. "They are zero value-added in my 15 months here. They report to the Department of State, they are not under the maneuver commander's command, so what are they doing in my battlespace? We are going to take over training of the ANP. We need to get fingerprint and retinal systems in their hands."

PARKS, NOT MOSQUES

In the Gurbuz district, whose 66,000 people are served by two newly built clinics but no doctor, it's like the Middle Ages. The village of Bowri Khel is home to an enormous madrassa with two 30-foot high towers, yet only a few men, and no women, know how to read. The madrassa teaches its students to memorize verses from a Koran they cannot read. None of the village's families own a generator, and, until three years ago, when an aid organization piped water to a storage tank outside the village, the women had to walk long distances carrying water. Left to their own devices, people here would be living almost wholly as their ancestors did 2,000 years ago. Not surprisingly, this was termed the "most unfriendly" village in Gurbuz by U.S. troops.

When I asked to meet a woman, the elders protested, "But the women here are uneducated. They cannot answer questions"—an odd answer, given that the men are uneducated, too. The only woman the elders of Bowri Khel presented for an interview was a 60-year old with shrewd eyes. A middle-aged male relative interrupted her whenever she attempted to speak. Still, she answered clearly that when the U.S.-built school opens, she expects no girls to attend. Her male relative responded to the follow-up question, "Because we are Pashtun people. We do not let our girls go to school. If a male teacher saw them, it would not be good for them."

In northern and western Afghanistan, half of the school population in the early grades is female; lines of little girls in uniforms making their way to or from school are a common sight. In poor, mountainous Ghazni, two provinces away, the Shiite Hazara people have almost universal school attendance. But Pashtuns have failed to embrace the new opportunities. This will doubtless have profound effects on political power in Afghanistan in the next generation. The Pashtuns will still constitute the largest ethnic group—40 percent is the usual estimate—but they will likely have far fewer prosperous, educated, influential leaders than their numbers warrant.

Though nearly every U.S. soldier here has come to develop warm feelings for the Afghans he's worked with, it's hard for most of the U.S. troops in Khost to see much good in Pashtun village culture. These young men, many of whom are already married with children, make a particular point of giving extra aid to the girls. Noting the one barefoot girl in a crowd of boys in cheap plastic sandals, Captain Hernandez, the father of two little girls, quietly says, "Every boy in this village will have shoes before she does."

The Army has avoided clashing with this prejudice. They do not convene shuras of female elders as they do with males, even though women have the most direct connection with many of the areas of life the Army is trying to improve, like water supply, health care, and poultry raising. (By law there is a quota for women on the elected Provincial Councils, and they have proved effective members as I noted in an article in The Weekly Standard of August 20, 2007.) In my view, this is the wrong message to send. If we are seen to set the value of women's work and opinions at zero just as most Pashtun men here do, how can we expect the culture to change? Afghans may resist change, but our values have prestige for them. American taxpayers are funding much of Afghanistan's development, and we have a right to tweak Afghan society in directions we consider beneficial.

Many educated Pashtuns agree. Daoud Sultanzoy, an Afghan-American member of parliament—and chairman of the powerful economic and rural development committee—is from Ghazni. (His great-grandfather was the feudal lord of much of central and eastern Afghanistan, including what is now Khost.) He has a sense of urgency about reforming his people's culture.

At a gathering for the Persian New Year in the home of the outgoing subgovernor of Sabari, an old retainer sang a beautiful traditional song. Sultanzoy frowned.

> Another song about how we Pashtuns are brave swordsmen! What about brave scientists? Brave doctors? Brave government officials? That is what this country needs. We can take a few years off from being brave swordsmen. When I drive around this area, I see places that could be beautiful parks, where people could relax and realize that life is a wonderful gift, and not think that they should blow themselves up to go to Paradise. Instead, I see mosques next to mosques next to other mosques.

Good governance is part of the picture, good ideas like the dispersal of troops in the districts is another. But culture is perhaps the largest factor, and the hardest to change. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Boris Blitz

On the hustings with London's unlikely new mayor

By James Kirchick

London

"They want a shot of me with the carcasses," Boris Johnson says, visibly annoyed with the cameramen and reporters surrounding him like a rugby scrum. We're standing in the middle of Smithfield's, a giant meat market in northwest London. One of the photographers asks the husky Johnson to punch the hanging beef "like Rocky." He won't do that, but as a compromise, he dons a white smock like the cockney-accented butchers who cheer him as he walks by, grips a carcass, and smiles for the cameras.

The tension between Boris Johnson the man who must restrain himself to meet expectations of what constitutes a "serious" political leader, and Boris Johnson the man who has a witty take on the world and can't help himself from sharing it with others, is visible this rainy morning. When a television producer asks if she can attach a lapel mic to his suit for the duration of his tour, he pointedly brushes her hand away with a "No thanks." Yet minutes later, he gets laughs from the supervisor showing him around the facility when he remarks aloud, "I've never seen so much tripe in my life, other than in the Livingstone press office," a reference to his opponent, the incumbent London mayor Ken Livingstone. The night before, visiting an East London mosque, he made light of the Livingstone administration's token contribution to the European Space Agency. Borrowing a line from Mike Huckabee, Johnson said that the only justification for such funding would be to send Livingstone into the cosmos.

Boris Johnson campaigns for the London mayoralty.

PETER MACDIARMID / GETTY IMAGES

James Kirchick is an assistant editor of the New Republic.

Boris Johnson is one of the most recognizable figures in British politics, second perhaps only to Prime Minister Gordon Brown. A recent poll conducted for the Conservatives found that, aside from the party's current leadership, the two figures most commonly associated with the Tories are Margaret Thatcher and Johnson. His "shock" of blond hair is but the most superficial reason for his celebrity. A professional journalist, he first entered the British public consciousness a decade ago as a regular panelist on the television quiz show *Have I Got News for You?* Johnson went into Parliament as a conservative in 2001—though he decided to relinquish his seat after winning the mayoralty on May 1. The enduring image of Johnson, an avid cyclist, involves him sloppily dressed in a suit, riding a bike with one hand on the handlebar with the other pressing a cellphone to his ear.

He is a man known more for his sense of humor—and propensity to commit the sort of gaffes that would have ruined even the most resilient of American politicians—than for any legislation or policies he has proposed (his contention that accusations of his carrying on an interoffice affair while editor of the *Spectator* magazine were an "inverted pyramid of piffle" has achieved "I did not sleep with that woman" status in the British political lexicon). A week with him on the campaign trail made it evident how he was—in the words of one bystander in posh Kensington—"cheering up London."

Though he's given up journalism for politics, Johnson will always have the writer's desire to narrate what he sees in the world around him. He has an internal monologue that can't be shut off. Out campaigning one afternoon, a red doubledecker bus passes by. "Wave to the bus, Boris!" one of his supporters said. He waves and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

smiles. And then in a voice just faintly above a whisper, that only I can hear standing right next to him, he mutters, "London commuters. Doleful. Angry."

On the trail, Johnson was a bursting ball of energy, so exuberant that he doesn't pay attention to where he is going, evidenced by his campaign aides telling him, at least half a dozen times in the course of a half hour on the streets of Kensington, to slow down or that he was going in the wrong direction. "Forward, forward, forward!" belts Johnson as he marched down the main drag. Everything with Boris is larger than life. He promises to build "loads of housing." Is he qualified to be mayor? "Supremely." When a smiling passerby clasps his hand and tells him "it's a pleasure to have a candidate with personality!" he responds, "We have gobs of that!"

One of the complaints that many fans of Boris made during the electoral campaign was that the "old Boris"—the one who made jokes, was a bit of a rogue, and got himself into trouble with authority—had disappeared. "I hope you get your sense of humor back," one supporter told him on the trail. "There is no distinction between the old Boris and the new Boris," he said, with the passion of a statesman, in response to a journalist asking where the "old Boris" had wandered. "They are indivisible, co-eternal, consubstantial." If he wasn't being funny enough on that particular morning, it's because "You're talking to me before I've had a cup of coffee."

The test for Johnson will be whether he is able to balance his sense of humor and relish for cracking jokes with the responsibilities of governing. For all of his faults, Livingstone did lead the city admirably in response to the July 7, 2005, subway bombings, and some wonder whether anyone would take Johnson seriously in the event of another attack. Johnson's passion for saying and writing what he thinks—a true journalistic zeal—may prove nettlesome while governing a diverse city of 7 million people, in an age when every "community" easily takes offense at unintended slights. One thing is certain: Johnson has the country's rapt attention as he tries to cement his managerial bona fides.

The London mayoral race brought a taste of American-style politics to the mother country. In the U.K., members of Parliament run in constituencies like American congressional districts. But except in the most extraordinary of cases (for instance, when an MP is involved in the sort of scandal on which a challenger can mount a recall campaign), Britons choose their MP based on party preference as they know that their local vote will ultimately determine which party forms the next government and thus, a vote for an MP is akin to a vote for a prime minister. Rather than a verdict on a candidate's individual positions, merits, and faults, parliamentary elections are referendums on overall party performance.

The mayoral election presented British voters with an opportunity to vote for an individual rather than a party. Emblematic of this was the introduction into English political discourse of that time-old, American political calculus of asking the electorate which candidate they'd rather have a beer with. The London *Times* polled focus groups to imagine the candidates at a pub. Voters "imagined [Livingstone] in a suit, ordering a beer and not talking to anyone." Johnson, however, "would be colourfully dressed, order a gin and tonic and talk freely to all." This anecdote is demonstrative, in its small way, of Johnson's ability to cut across the class lines that have traditionally divided British politics. "Where Ken stands for fragmented grievance," *Spectator* editor Matthew d'Ancona wrote in an endorsement of his former boss, "Boris stands for shared aspiration."

> Asked to imagine the candidates at a pub, voters saw Livingstone 'in a suit, ordering a beer and not talking to anyone.' Johnson, however, 'would be colourfully dressed, order a gin and tonic and talk freely to all.'

So an election uniquely tailored to highlight candidates' personalities could not have had two more eccentric individuals participating. (That Livingstone and Johnson are both estranged from their national parties—thanks to their various and sundry extracurricular activities—further added to the sense that this was a personality contest.) David Aaronovitch, a columnist for the *Times* of London, told me that the mayoral election was a contest between "updated, modified stereotypes" of modern British political personalities. If Boris is the classic upper-class character out of P.G. Wodehouse, then Ken Livingstone is the caricature of an aging Marxist revolutionary. A common observation made by journalists covering the race was that this was the first time in British politics that the candidates were known merely by their first names: "The Boris and Ken Show." Indeed, Livingstone's team grew so frustrated with Johnson's popular appeal that any staffer who referred to him as "Boris" was fined £5.

Viewed as a battle of titanic personalities, the London election harked back over 40 years to an American mayoral race. In 1965, conservative intellectual, bon vivant, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all around polymath William F. Buckley Jr. ran for mayor of New York City against the machine Democrat Abe Beame and the handsome, smooth-talking Rockefeller Republican John Lindsay. Like Buckley, Johnson was painted as a Neanderthal by his opponents, yet brought considerable intellect and wit to the campaign trail. Both men introduced a welcome air of levity to the normally staid world of politics. Yet while Buckley did not come even close to winning the mayor's race, Johnson emerged victorious. Even he seemed like he couldn't actually believe what was happening. "He may only have realized the extent of the job after he accepted the nomination," a prominent Tory told me. Watching Johnson make his acceptance speech, I half-expected him to demand a recount.

Johnson joins the basketball class at Stockwell Park High School in South London.

ZUMA WIRE WEST PHOTOS

Electioneering for the London mayoralty was humbling. When he was a columnist for the *Daily Telegraph* and editor of the *Spectator*, Johnson opined on such grave issues as the Iraq war and the case for impeaching Tony Blair. Campaigning on the minutiae of municipal government wasn't easy for a man who used to write a luxury motoring column for British *GQ* and produced a two-part series on the Roman empire for the BBC. Debates on the hustings were dominated by arguments over the merits of "bendy-buses," which Livingstone introduced in 2001, over an updated version of the beloved Routemaster, the double-decker behemoth with an open-air door and conductor at the back. "I think we should allow cyclists to turn on red," Johnson told one fellow biker during his canvassing in Kensington.

Mundane as the affairs that dominate municipal governance may be, as mayor of London, Johnson will have a significant national—not to mention international—role. Although only in existence since 2000, the office, given the capital city's sheer size in relation to the rest of the country and its role as an international financial capital, is one of the highest profile political positions in Britain. The mayor has a lot of money at his disposal and a bully pulpit (as Livingstone so ably demonstrated during his two terms in office, using it to broadcast his vociferous opposition to the Iraq war and to label President Bush "the greatest threat to life on this planet that we've most probably ever seen"). Provided Johnson performs his duties reasonably well and wins a second term, he may have the chance to make the case for becoming leader of the Tories and a potential prime minister.

Livingstone's campaign strategists knew it would be easier to scare voters away from Johnson if they could por-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tray him not as some shambolic idiot incapable of running a magazine (never mind a city), but as a nefarious right-winger intent on dragging London back 150 years. Steve Norris, a former Tory cabinet minister who ran for mayor in 2000 and 2004, described Livingstone's campaign message thus: "If you don't vote for me you will get Boris Johnson who is a racist fascist who loves Margaret Thatcher who destroyed London." I saw Livingstone describe Johnson as a "genuine 19th-century liberal who believes in the least government possible." At a debate entitled, "Does Ken Deserve a Third Term as Mayor of London?" historian Tristram Hunt attempted to place the mayoral race in transcendent historical context with Livingstone as a progressive in the mold of a Fabian Society intellectual and Johnson playing the part of a laissez-faire Victorian who believes that private charity ought be the only recourse for the poor. Listing all of the wonderful improvements by socialist governments past, Hunt ominously warned, "All this is at risk if Boris wins."

Ken Livingstone campaigns in northwest London on May 1.

AFP PHOTO / LEON NEAL

To paint Johnson as a far-right figure, Livingstone staffers dug up a 2002 column he had written for the *Telegraph*. It would form a key talking point for the duration of the campaign. As Johnson later explained, the column was intended to mock Tony Blair's frequent visits to Africa as "a spoof of a 1950's-style account of a Commonwealth tour," describing for readers the "watermelon smiles" of "tribal warriors" and "flag-waving piccaninnies." The use of such language might have been insensitive, as Johnson readily admitted and apologized for, yet it was hardly the stuff of the whites-only British National party, as Livingstone and his allies in the media attempted to cast it.

Ultimately, the effort by Johnson's critics to portray him as a bumbling clown on the one hand and a nefarious racist on the other collapsed under the weight of its own inherent contradictions. Johnson manifestly isn't a racist and in person seems like he couldn't impersonate one even if he tried. Campaigning throughout London, Johnson frequently reminded audiences that his great-grandfather, a Turkish journalist named Ali Kemal, "knew the Koran off by heart." At a BBC debate, answering a question about his remark several weeks earlier on an Asian-themed talk show that he could "out-ethnic" the presenter, Johnson said, "My own genetic diversity is pretty great and my children resemble a kind of U.N. Peacekeeping force" (Johnson's mother-in-law is Sikh).

The sheer silliness of the "Boris is a racist" argument was crystallized for me on my way to the Tube station in Kensington. Outside stood a young man of South Asian descent wearing a "Back Boris" T-shirt passing out leaflets to passersby while calling out "Boris for mayor!" Just a few feet away, a white man of similar age, dressed to the punk nines, was sitting on a pedestal interrupting him with shouts of: "Boris is a racist!"

"No he's not," the Asian man shot back.

They contradicted each other for a minute, until the Asian man demanded that the white man "Say it to my face." The white man did just that, loudly calling Johnson a "racist" and repeating the familiar charge about "piccaninnies" and "watermelon smiles" with less than a hair's breadth between him and his pro-Boris counterpart. The Asian man replied, "Racism is a very serious issue," accusations of which are "not to be thrown around all willy-nilly."

Johnson fought back with insults of his own. He taunted Livingstone as "Mayor Leavingsoon" and as a man who "emerged from the bowels of the Labor government." The words "sleaze" and "cronies" featured prominently (as did the phrase "Tammany Hall," yet another example of the Americanization of the mayoral race). Unlike Livingstone's charges of racism, however, these accusations, while harsh, were not unfair. In January, a television documentary showed how Livingstone had bestowed high-paying, municipal jobs on a coterie belonging to a far-left splinter group, Socialist Action, with which Livingstone has long been associated. Two months later, a senior aide to Livingstone resigned after accusations arose that he was funneling public monies to sham charities operated by his friends and, in one case, a woman to whom he had sent salacious emails.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In a campaign with many absurd moments, the height must have been when Livingstone was asked about how his original estimate of £4 billion in costs associated with hosting the 2012 Olympics was recently deemed "entirely unrealistic" by a government body. Livingstone confessed that the underestimate was a deliberate attempt to get the British government to invest billions of pounds in the blighted neighborhood of East London, and that, frankly, Livingstone didn't care all that much about "three weeks of sport." "It wasn't a mistake. . . . It was exactly how I plotted it to ensnare the government to put money into an area it has neglected for 30 years," he explained. The actual price tag for Britain's hosting the Olympics is expected to surpass £10 billion.

Livingstone looked perpetually tired and worn out on the campaign trail, in contrast to the effervescent Boris, whose eyes bulge out of his head whenever he speaks. The same documentary that detailed the excesses of Livingstone's city hall also showed him drinking whiskey at numerous meetings, sometimes early in the morning. I realized Livingstone had resigned himself to defeat when, at a debate sponsored by the U.K. Evangelical Alliance, I saw him sipping a glass of wine in full view of a BBC cameraman and later carrying it up to the table.

One of the delights of the Johnson victory has been the spectacle of Britain's left-wing mandarins venting their outrage and frustration. The day of the election, the *Guardian* printed a collection of quotations from Londoners—"some famous, some not"—"imagin[ing] what it would be like if this bigoted, lying, Old Etonian buffoon got his hands on our diverse and liberal capital." The fashion designer Vivienne Westwood stated that a Johnson mayoralty would expose "democracy as a sham." Charlie Brooker, a *Guardian* columnist, remarked, "I'd sooner vote for a dog than Boris Johnson. Cartoon characters should only run cartoon cities." (A similar observation was expressed to me by a Liberal Democrat, who said, "Boris will turn London into a Roald Dahl novel.") Minutes after the election results were officially announced, one *Guardian* writer took to the newspaper's website with a bitter lament entitled "Enter the Jester." Meanwhile, more optimistic Londoners wait with bated breath to see if Johnson's 2003 promise that "if you vote for the Conservatives, your wife will get bigger breasts, and your chances of driving a BMW M3 will increase," might, in actual fact, materialize.

Johnson's reputation as a "buffoon" or a "clown"—words often seen in the same sentence as his name—derives as much from his gaffes as it does from the simple fact that politicians, even in the U.K., are by and large an unfunny bunch. A sense of humor is so rare amongst the political class that Johnson's wit is judged to be a liability and a character failure, rather than the refreshing elixir that it actually is. In his biography of Johnson, the *Daily Telegraph* journalist Andrew Gimson pointed to a column he wrote about a visit with Italian politician Silvio Berlusconi. Johnson observed that Italians "like him not in spite of the gaffes, but because of the gaffes. It is Berlusconi's genius that he has become the only world leader in the great queue of grey-suited linetoers who can be consistently relied on to say something eye-popping." Johnson might as well have been writing about himself.

Neil Kinnock, a former Labour party leader, famously remarked, 'Everybody likes Ken Livingstone except the people who know him.'

At the end of the day, perhaps it was sheer force of personality that won the election for Johnson. He has a humility—knocked into him during numerous public shamings—that Livingstone lacks. He's a man who has taken his lumps and knows how to deal with adversity in a more respectful manner than the dirigiste he defeated. Neil Kinnock, a former Labour party leader who wrestled with Livingstone decades ago to prevent the party's being hijacked by the left, famously remarked, "Everybody likes Ken Livingstone except the people who know him."

Although the vast majority of Londoners don't know Livingstone personally, they had the opportunity to learn enough about him over the course of his eight years as mayor. By contrast, Steve Norris told me that, "The only people who don't like Boris are the people who haven't met him." If that's true, then Johnson has ample opportunity to further his national political ambitions during his tenure.

In a country whose preeminence on the world stage has come and gone, Johnson is a ray of forward-looking light, a sunbeam of positivism. There is something distinctly American about his energy, ambition, and, most important, his optimism. A prominent Tory summed up what his advice to Johnson would be in the event that he won. "Boris: It's great that you won on personality. But now you gotta govern on competence."

That's the test Boris Johnson now faces. At the very least, his mayoralty will be a joy to behold. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jeremiah Wright's 'Trumpet'

The magazine produced by Barack Obama's pastor reveals the content of his theology

By Stanley Kurtz

To the question of the moment—What did Barack Obama know and when did he know it?—I answer, Obama knew everything, and he's known it for ages. Far from succumbing to surprise and shock after Jeremiah Wright's disastrous performance at the National Press Club, Barack Obama must have long been aware of his pastor's political radicalism. A careful reading of nearly a year's worth of *Trumpet Newsmagazine*, Wright's glossy national "lifestyle magazine for the socially conscious," makes it next to impossible to conclude otherwise.

Wright founded *Trumpet Newsmagazine* in 1982 as a "church newspaper"—primarily for his own congregation, one gathers—to "preach a message of social justice to those who might not hear it in worship service." So Obama's presence at sermons is not the only measure of his knowledge of Wright's views. Glance through even a single issue of *Trumpet*, and Wright's radical politics are everywhere—in the pictures, the headlines, the highlighted quotations, and above all in the articles themselves. It seems inconceivable that, in 20 years, Obama would never have picked up a copy of *Trumpet*. In fact, Obama himself graced the cover at least once (although efforts to obtain that issue from the publisher or Obama's interview with the magazine from his campaign were unsuccessful).

Rev. Jeremiah Wright

AP PHOTO / PAUL SANCYA

Building on his reputation as a charismatic and "socially conscious" preacher (and no doubt also upon the fame conferred by his Obama connection), Wright decided several years ago to take the publication national. In September 2005, *Trumpet* officially separated from Wright's church and became an independent entity, with Wright as CEO and his two eldest daughters managing the magazine. Then in March 2006, with key financial backing from the TV One network, *Trumpet* released its first nationally distributed issue. The goal was to turn *Trumpet* into "a more sophisticated publication that would speak not just to black Christians but to the entire African-American community." In November 2005, Wright's daughter and *Trumpet* publisher/editor in chief Jeri Wright announced the goal of increasing circulation from 5,000 to 100,000 in 10 months. Thanks to a national publicity blitz, she was able to declare that goal had been met well ahead of schedule.

If you've heard about the "Empowerment Award" bestowed upon Louis Farrakhan by Wright, or about Wright's derogation of "garlic-nosed" Italians (of the ancient Roman variety), then you already know something about *Trumpet*. Farrakhan's picture was on the cover of a special November/December 2007 double issue, along with an announcement of the Empowerment Award and Wright's praise of Farrakhan as a 20th- and 21st-century "giant." Wright's words about Farrakhan were almost identical to those that, just four months later, led a supposedly shocked Obama to repudiate Wright. The insult to Italians was in the same double issue.

I obtained the 2006 run of *Trumpet*, from the first nationally distributed issue in March to the November/December double issue. To read it is to come away impressed by Wright's thoroughgoing political radicalism. There are plenty of arresting sound bites, of course, but the larger context is more illuminating—and more disturbing—than any single shock-quotation. *Trumpet* provides a rounded picture of Wright's views, and what it shows unmistakably

Stanley Kurtz is a senior fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is that the now-infamous YouTube snippets from Wright's sermons are authentic reflections of his core political and theological beliefs. It leaves no doubt that his religion is political, his attitude toward America is bitterly hostile, and he has fundamental problems with capitalism, white people, and "assimilationist" blacks. Even some of Wright's famed "good works," and his moving "Audacity to Hope" sermon, are placed in a disturbing new light by a reading of *Trumpet*.

Getting across his political message is Wright's highest priority. Back in May 2007, the liberal, Chicago-based *Christian Century* published an extended study—really a defense—of Wright's church. Attempting to inoculate Wright (and Obama) from critics like Sean Hannity and Tucker Carlson, *Christian Century* dismissed the notion that Wright's Trinity church "is a political organization constantly advocating for social change." Yet in *Trumpet*, Wright and his fellow columnists show themselves to be exactly that.

Wright is the foremost acolyte of James Cone's "black liberation theology," which puts politics at the center of religion. Wright himself is explicit:

> [T]here was no separation Biblically and historically and there is no separation contemporaneously between 'religion and politics.' . . . The Word of God has everything to do with racism, sexism, militarism, social justice and the world in which we live daily.

In fact, for all his rousing rhetoric, Wright is a bit of a policy wonk, moving fluidly and frequently from excoriations of American foreign policy in various African countries, to denunciations of Senate votes on the minimum wage, to fulminations against FCC licensing policies and Clear Channel, and so much more. Wright is up to speed on local, national, and international politics, and it's tough to imagine him missing an opportunity to confer with Obama on his wide array of legislative crusades.

When *Trumpet* surprised Wright with a "Lifetime Achievement Trumpeter Award," it said that he "preaches a liberation theology" whose "religious message [is] fused with political activism." Not only does black liberation theology founder James Cone see Wright as his most important follower, but Wright's successor as pastor at Trinity, Otis Moss III, also views Wright as the quintessential political pastor. Moss (himself now considered the most promising young black-liberationist preacher in the country) turned down the opportunity to step into the leadership of his own preacher-father's nationally known church for a chance to serve at the still more renowned Trinity. Wright's Trinity, affirms Moss, is "the most socially conscious African-centered and politically active church in the nation."

While the majority of *Trumpet*'s articles weave radical politics into a religious framework, some are purely political. For example, the April 2006 issue features a column entitled "Demand Impeachment Now!" The author pointedly refuses to call Bush "president," merely referring to him as the "resident" of the White House (and therefore as "Resident Bush"). Another piece taunts Vice President Cheney for his shooting accident and ends, "America, it's time for regime change." Neither piece has so much as a religious veneer.

Back issues of Trumpet Newsmagazine

What about patriotism? While many consider Wright's call for God to damn America irredeemable, others might argue that "in context," Wright's prophetic denunciations actually prove his love of country. Unfortunately, neither Wright nor any of the other regular *Trumpet* columnists displays a trace of this "I'm denouncing you because I love you" stance. On the contrary, the pages of *Trumpet* resonate with enraged criticism of the United States. Indeed, they feature explicit repudiations of even the most basic expressions of American patriotism, supporting instead an "African-centered" perspective that treats black Americans as virtual strangers in a foreign land.

Although the expression "African American" appears in *Trumpet*, the magazine more typically refers to American blacks as "Africans living in the Western Diaspora." Wright and the other columnists at *Trumpet* seem to think of blacks as in, but not of, America. The deeper connection is to Africans on the continent, and to the worldwide diaspora of Afri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can-originated peoples. In an image that captures the spirit of Wright's relationship to the United States, he speaks of blacks as "songbirds" locked in "this cage called America."

Wright views the United States as a criminal nation. Here is a typical passage: "Do you see God as a God who approves of Americans taking other people's countries? Taking other people's women? Raping teenage girls and calling it love (as in Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings)?" Anyone who does think this way, Wright suggests, should revise his notion of God. Implicitly drawing on Marxist "dependency theory," Wright blames Africa's troubles on capitalist exploitation by the West, and also on inadequate American aid: "Some analysts would go so far as to even call what [the United States, the G-8, and multinational corporations] are doing [in Africa] genocide!"

According to Wright, America's alleged genocide in Africa, as well as its treatment of "Africans in the Western diaspora," both leads to and flows from a single underlying truth: "White supremacy is the bed rock of the philosophical, ideological and theological foundations of this country." So for Wright, it's really not a question of correcting America in the spirit of a loving patriot. America, to Wright, is a kind of alien formation, scarcely less of a "cage" for "Africans in the Western Diaspora" than it was during the days of slavery: "[T]his country is built off, and continues to exist on, the premise of white supremacy." Again and again, Wright makes the point that America's criminality and racism are not aberrations but of the essence of the nation, that they are every bit as alive today as during the slave era, and that America is therefore no better than the worst international offenders: "White supremacy undergirds the thought, the ideology, the theology, the sociology, the legal structure, the educational system, the healthcare system, and the entire *reality* of the United States of America and South Africa!" (Emphasis Wright's.)

One of Wright's most striking images of American evil invokes Hurricane Katrina. Here are excerpts of a piece in the May 2006 *Trumpet*:

> We need to educate our children to the reality of white supremacy.
>
> We need to educate our children about the white supremacist's foundations of the educational system.
>
> When the levees in Louisiana broke alligators, crocodiles and piranha swam freely through what used to be the streets of New Orleans. That is an analogy that we need to drum into the heads of our African American children (and indeed all children!).
>
> In the flood waters of white supremacy . . . there are also crocodiles, alligators and piranha!
>
> The policies with which we live now and against which our children will have to struggle in order to bring about "the beloved community," are policies shaped by predators.
>
> We lay a foundation, deconstructing the household of white supremacy with tools that are not the master's tools. We lay the foundation with hope. We deconstruct the vicious and demonic ideology of white supremacy with hope. Our hope is not built on faith-based dollars, empty liberal promises or veiled hate-filled preachments of the so-called conservatives. Our hope is built on Him who came in the flesh to set us free.

Given Wright's conviction that America, past and present, is criminally white supremacist—even genocidal—to its core, Wright is not a fan of patriotic celebration. Predictably, Columbus Day is a day of rage for Wright. Calling Columbus a racist slave trader, Wright excoriates the holiday as "a national act of amnesia and denial," part of the "sick and myopic arrogance called Western History."

Strangely, given his view of this country, Wright insists that real credit for America's discovery goes to Africans. As evidence for the African discovery of America, Wright cites Dr. Ivan van Sertima's book *They Came Before Columbus*. (Sertima's work has been severely criticized by scholars and was dismissed by prominent British archaeologist Glyn Daniel in a 1977 *New York Times* book review as "ignorant rubbish.") Wright concludes: "Giving Columbus the credit is called 'American History' or 'The History of Western Civilization.' Back in the 1960's we called it what it was and is, however, and that is 'a pack of lies.'"

Contempt for Columbus Day is hardly novel, but in the 2006 July/August issue, regular *Trumpet* columnist the Rev. Reginald Williams Jr. comes down hard on the Fourth of July, which Williams dismisses as "the national holiday of the dominant culture." Williams invokes Frederick Douglass's famous 1852 Fourth of July address:

> What to the slave is the 4th of July? What have I to do with your national independence? . . . What to the American slave is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham . . . your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of rejoicing are empty and heartless . . . your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

. . . mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages.

To Williams, Douglass's words ring every bit as true today as they did before the Civil War and the abolition of slavery. (This column is illustrated with a large picture of slave manacles.) Williams goes on to echo and update Douglass, condemning the Fourth as "nothing more than a day off work and a time for some good barbeque to the millions of African Americans who suffer and have suffered under the policies of this government and this country." Liberation theologian that he is, Williams is particularly hostile to those who "will even invoke religious fervor, and biblical quotes to justify their flawed sense of phony patriotism." No flag pins here.

Hostility to capitalism is another of *Trumpet*'s pervasive themes. As we've seen, Wright blames multinational corporations for conflict and poverty in Africa. Trinity Church urges parishioners to boycott Wal-Mart, and Wright decries what he calls "the "Wal-martization of the world." In another one of his regular *Trumpet* columns, Reginald Williams criticizes McDonald's for failing to heed leftist advocacy groups by voluntarily raising the price it pays for tomatoes (so as to raise the wages of tomato pickers). Williams apparently wants to replace market mechanisms with a pricing system dictated by "human rights groups."

While the nationally distributed issues of *Trumpet* in 2006 contained no pieces blaming 9/11 on America's "terrorist" foreign policy (as Wright did in a famous sermon), one remarkable piece defended then-congresswoman Cynthia McKinney's suspicion that the Bush administration knew about the 9/11 attacks before they happened. This column, "The Beloved Cynthia McKinney" (illustrated with pictures of McKinney in model-like poses), decries the fact that McKinney was "tarred and feathered in the press" for raising questions about possible government foreknowledge of 9/11. The "crimes of 9/11," it darkly announces, are "not only unsolved, but covered up by both Democrats and Republicans."

America's justice system is another favorite *Trumpet* theme. Wright likes to call it "the criminal injustice system." A piece headed "Read Me My Rights: Protocol for Deal-

Blow, Jeremiah, Blow

Glance through even a single issue of *Trumpet,* and Jeremiah Wright's radical politics are everywhere.

"African children are being left as orphans because of HIV/AIDS. In South Africa, thousands of young girls are being raped because the 'myth' is that if you have sex with a child who is a teenager or younger, then you can be cured of AIDS!

"The incredible plight of the African child has now been made visible for the entire world to see. The entire world can now look at the Continent of Africa and see what the policies of the United States, the G-8 countries, globalization and transnational corporations like Coca-Cola and Wal-Mart have done and continue to do on a daily basis to those children.

"Some analysts would go so far as to even call what they are doing 'genocide!'"

—*Wright,* Trumpet, *June 2006*

"An anthropology that sees some as more equal than others cannot but help produce a sick sociology. An anthropology, that sees whites as superior and people of color as inferior, allows a sociology—an ordering of society—that defines non-whites as non-human. . . . A sick anthropology produces a sick sociology and allows Christians in America to wear black robes during the day and don the white robes of the Klan during the night."

—*Wright,* Trumpet, *September 2006*

"Some of the demons against who we struggle are gigantic.

"Some of those demons are filthy rich. They are entrenched. They control the media. They buy off preachers. They tempt us with 'bling-bling' and they put a cute 'spin' on their self-destructive ideology. They remain demons, however!"

—*Wright,* Trumpet, *November / December 2006*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing with the Police" decries racial profiling and counsels those detained to refuse to speak to police without a lawyer present. Reginald Williams calls prisons "the new concrete plantations" and likens the inclusion of nonvoting prisoners in state population counts to the official counting of nonvoting slaves in state populations before the Civil War. In other words, the abolition of slavery and segregation notwithstanding, America is still a fundamentally racist nation. Wright likes to call the American North "up South."

Is Wright an anti-white racist? He would certainly deny it. In *When Black Men Stand Up for God* (a book he coauthored, in praise of Louis Farrakhan's Million Man March), Wright says, "The enemy is not white people. The enemy is white supremacy." There are white members of Wright's church, and black liberation theologians have always, if a bit reluctantly, welcomed support from white radicals. Nonetheless, the problem of reverse racism keeps coming up, abetted by episodes like the assault on "garlic-nosed" Italians.

Wright's swipe at Italians is actually directed toward the Romans who crucified Jesus (in what James Cone calls a "first-century lynching"). Following black liberation theology, Wright emphasizes that the black Jesus was "murdered by the European oppressors who looked down on His people." In a sense, then, disclaimers notwithstanding, Wright turns the crucifixion into a potential charter for "anti-European" anger.

Wright, however, rejects the notion that "black racism" is even possible. That is why he prefers the term "white supremacy" to "racism." "Racism," says Wright, is a "slippery" and "nebulous" term, precisely because it seems potentially applicable to blacks and whites alike. The term "white supremacy" solves this problem, and Wright deploys it at every opportunity.

Wright opposes "assimilation," expressing displeasure with the likes of Condoleezza Rice, Clarence Thomas, and Colin Powell. He dismisses such blacks as "sell outs." Wright's hostility to assimilation goes beyond classic American expressions of pride in ethnic or religious heritage. For example, Wright claims that "desegregation is not the same as integration. . . . Desegregation did not mean that white children would now come to Black schools and learn our story, our history, our heritage, our legacy, our beauty and our strength!" This, for Wright, is genuine "integration."

One of the most striking features of Wright's *Trumpet* columns is the light they shed on his longstanding theme of "hope." Wright's "Audacity to Hope" sermon is built around a painting he describes of a torn and tattered woman sitting atop a globe and playing a harp that has lost all but a single string. In that sermon, Wright's allegory of hope amidst despair concentrates on our need to soldier on in faith amidst personal tragedy. Yet the "Audacity" sermon also features allusions to South Africa's Sharpeville Massacre (1960) and "white folks's greed [that] runs a world in need."

In *Trumpet*, the political context of the "hope" theme is harsher still. Instead of counseling determination amidst personal tragedy, Wright uses "hope" to exhort his readers to boldly carry on the long-odds struggle against white supremacist America: "We deconstruct the vicious and demonic ideology of white supremacy with hope." Here's another passage in the same mode:

> [O]ur fight against Wal-Mart's practices has not been won and might never be won in our lifetime. That does not mean we stop struggling against what it is they stand for that is not in keeping with God's will and God's Kingdom that we pray will come every day.

In that earlier striking passage on the post-Katrina flooding in New Orleans, Wright speaks of his determination to "drum into the heads of our African American children (and indeed, all children!)" the idea that America is flooded with the "crocodiles, alligators and piranha" of white supremacy. That image creates the context for one of Wright's most energetic invocations of "hope":

> We are on the verge of launching our African-centered Christian school. The dream of that school, which we articulated in 1979, was built on hope. That hope still lives. That school has to have at its core an understanding and assessment of white supremacy as we deconstruct that reality to help our children become all that God created them to be when God made them in God's own image.

The construction of a school for inner city children undoubtedly falls into the category of the "good works" which nearly everyone recognizes as a benefit bestowed by Trinity Church on the surrounding community, Wright's ideology notwithstanding. But is a school that portrays America as a white supremacist nation filled with predatory alligators and piranha a good work?

Wright's status as a father-figure comes through clearly in the pages of *Trumpet*. In a *Trumpet* interview, Jesse Jackson characterizes Wright as "between a huge father, pastor, preacher, [and] prophet." Wright's young minister protégés call him "Daddy J" and "Uncle J," and perhaps this latter name prompted Obama's reference to Wright as "like an uncle." Obama's longing for a father figure surely gave him a great hunger to get to know what Wright was about. In their first meeting, Wright warned Obama that many considered him too politically radical, and it is simply inconceivable that in 20 years' time someone as sharp as Obama did not grasp the intensely political themes repeated in so much of what Wright says and does. Radical politics is no sideline for Wright, but the very core of his theology and practice.

There can be no mistaking it. What did Barack Obama know and when did he know it? Everything. Always. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua, Hugo Chávez of Venezuela

OMAR TORRES / AFP / GETTY; AFP / JOSE CARUCI

Trouble Down Below

What's wrong with Latin America BY MARK FALCOFF

What's new in Latin America? One way of finding out is to go to the website of the Spanish edition of the *Miami Herald.* Recently, for example, these were the lead stories: "Rosales [leader of the opposition in Venezuela] denounces kidnappings by the FARC [the Colombian guerrillas] in Venezuela"; "Retired military officer [in Argentina] caught with 1,100 kilos of cocaine"; "Six bodies bound in a shallow grave in Northern Mexico [apparently members of the Juárez narco-cartel]"; "Former vice-president denounces electoral fraud in Paraguay"; "Police lack clues in the case of the murder of a former Ecuadorian congressman"; "Huge arsenal discovered in a Honduran jail"; "Venezuela and Colombia on the verge of breaking diplomatic relations."

Forgotten Continent
The Battle for Latin America's Soul
by Michael Reid
Yale, 400 pp., $30

Is the *Herald* exaggerating or sensationalizing? Not at all. As someone who has been following the Latin American prints for more than four decades, I can attest that these stories represent a quite typical diet of the daily news reports coming out of the huge continent to our immediate south. Today is like yesterday; tomorrow will be pretty much like today.

In spite of this discouraging picture, some people seem to think that, with all our other problems, we should be spending far more time agonizing about the fate of these dysfunctional societies. One of them is Michael Reid, a British journalist married to a Peruvian who, for many years, has reported on the region for the *Economist.* To this end he has penned this book—a vast *tour d'horizon* chock-full of data, local color,

Mark Falcoff, resident scholar emeritus at the American Enterprise Institute, is at work on a book about the Hispanosphere.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

observations, and economic analysis. In fact, it reads like back issues of Reid's magazine, stitched together and perhaps expanded at greater length.

Not that this is all bad. *Forgotten Continent* is probably the best general book currently available on Latin America, and one not likely to be superseded for some time. It is knowledgeable, trenchant, and for the most part eminently fair and objective. Who will want to bother to plow through its 400 pages (some rather long on facts and figures) is hard to say; as publishers and agents have been telling me for years, books on Latin America appeal only to a left-wing market—and not a very large one at that.

To be sure, Reid's approach is not ideological; it is written in the *Economist*'s house style: a conflation of condescension, hard economic data, and on-one-hand-but-on-the-other-hand pronouncements which seem always somehow to come down (just barely) on the side of optimism. Whether in the case of Latin America such optimism is justified is quite another matter.

The thesis of the book—it can be easily discerned from the subtitle—is that Latin America is at an institutional fork in the road. One path has been taken by the fragile but sometimes determined efforts at democracy by about a dozen countries, led by Chile, Colombia, Brazil, and Uruguay, followed at some distance by countries like Peru, most of Central America, and Paraguay. The other has been taken by republics that have succumbed to the populist temptation—led, of course, by Venezuela's clownish dictator-president Hugo Chávez, but followed closely by Bolivia's Evo Morales, Ecuador's Rafael Correa, Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega, and the on-again/off-again Kirchners in Argentina.

The Kirchners of Argentina

DANIEL DARRÁS / AFP / GETTY

Reid is not optimistic about the possibilities of populism resolving the region's problems, even in countries like Venezuela that are currently awash in petrodollars. In that regard he is quite right, and he has plenty of facts and figures to back him up. But his metaphorical fork in the road is more imaginary than real. The fundamental problem is not the *faux-révolutionisme* of populist demagogues, who are bound to come to a bad end, but the highly unsatisfactory performance of the new democracies.

Reid says that the good news about the region is that the swing of the pendulum between weak civilian governments and incompetent (sometimes hideously repressive) military dictatorships has come to an end. So has hyperinflation. The bad news is that these societies—even ones ruled by more or less civilized rules of the electoral game—are still vastly underperforming compared with their (theoretical) potential.

Here and there he finds bright spots in all the crucial areas—economic policy, rule of law, governance, even education—and obviously some countries (notably Chile and, to some extent, Brazil) are doing much better than others. But a careful reading of Reid's survey, which admittedly covers a huge and complex area, nonetheless leads to one dismal conclusion. Even in the best of cases one is left with scattered archipelagos of progress in a huge sea of mediocrity and stagnation.

Not surprisingly, Latin America as a whole has lost significant geopolitical weight over the last four decades. A case in point: In 1966, Mexico was richer than Portugal and Brazil was more affluent than South Korea. But in 2002, the income per capita in both Portugal and South Korea was *twice* that of Mexico and Brazil. In 1950, the average income per head in Latin America was 25 percent of the United States (while in Asia it was 10 percent). But in 2000, Latin America had dropped to 20 percent of its northern neighbor while Asia had risen to a full 25 percent.

No wonder investors have misplaced the region's collective phone number. What's the problem? Many Latin American politicians and their epigones in the American academy blame everything on "neo-liberalism"—that is, the free market reforms enacted in the go-go 1990s. Reid carefully dispenses with this argument, even to the point of defending the much-maligned "Washington Consensus." But he discards cultural and historical explanations, even though he fails to come up with a satisfactory alternative.

The truth is that these are conquest societies, orphans of long-disappeared empires who lack any vision

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a national project, or commitment to it (Brazil is a possible exception) or even, in many cases, any clear notion of national identity. Some, like Bolivia, are merely geographical expressions rather than real countries; almost all are afflicted by racial and social divisions and discrimination, exemplified by the fact that educational budgets—as, indeed, most government benefits, including social security and pensions—are tilted towards a small but still sizable "white" or "near-white" minority. Institutions are weak or nonexistent; too many crucial national issues are solved privately or *en familia.*

While there have been periodic attacks on vested privilege—in Mexico, Peru, Argentina, or Nicaragua, for example—rather than creating new and lasting opportunities for the landless or unemployed, they have usually ended up leaving the entire society poorer or, in the best of cases, simply creating a new class of well-connected generals and politicians who are entrepreneurs. (This is the fate that undoubtedly awaits Cuba once the Castro brothers have departed.)

It is refreshing, in a book of this sort, to see that the usual rosary of accusations against the United States is missing. Reid notes, for example, that intervention is only one side of American policy; the other is the search for peaceful cooperation. (Actually, he might have said, both at the same time.) But while on some historical issues he is right on the mark—he dismisses charges of U.S. responsibility for the coups in Chile and Brazil—on others he is quite wrong. The CIA did not blow up a Belgian ammunition ship in Havana harbor in 1960, nor was it responsible for the flight of Jean-Paul Aristide from Haiti.

He does, however, more broadly grasp the central paradox of inter-American relations; namely, the on-again off-again Latin complaints against Washington. Whatever is wrong with Latin America is the fault of the United States—either by intervening in matters that don't concern it, or by failing to embrace the region's problems as its own. ("I've got a problem; what are *you* going to do about it?") The Bush administration stands condemned for failing to give Latin America the priority it imagines it is due; the one that follows will no doubt be taken to task for excessive meddling and lack of "mutual respect." And back again.

In fact, as Reid notes, the only serious revolution of which Latin America seems capable is out-migration. Young people all over the continent dream of leaving, and many do. In 2005, an astounding *22 million* Latin Americans worked in the developed world, having arrived there legally or illegally, followed by another 3-5 million who now work in more prosperous neighboring countries, such as Bolivians who emigrate to Chile or Paraguayans to Brazil. In the same year it was estimated that remittances to their home countries amounted to $54 billion, which is to say, more than all the foreign direct investment and foreign aid to the region combined.

The escape valve of emigration is important not merely for poor countries like Bolivia or Ecuador but even in relatively sophisticated societies like Mexico, Colombia, or Costa Rica. At this writing at least one out of every ten Argentines lives in Europe, Canada, or the United States. Not surprisingly, the debates on immigration policy underway in our own presidential campaign are followed with acute apprehension in nearly two dozen countries to the south.

As noted earlier, Reid is troubled by our current lack of interest in the region, and thinks that more attention and resources need to be devoted to it, not just by the United States but by the European Union as well. But as he points out, "It is neither poor enough to attract pity and aid, nor dangerous enough to excite strategic calculation, nor until recently has it grown enough economically to quicken board room pulses." This, together with its deteriorating infrastructure, declining physical security, and loss of global competitiveness condemns Latin America to permanent residence in the slummy suburbs of Western civilization—an admittedly unenviable position, but one apparently determined by its tragic history.

Why outsiders should try to solve the Latin American conundrum when so many Latins themselves have all but given up on it is a question that this otherwise comprehensive book fails to address. ♦

Evo Morales of Bolivia

STR / AFP / GETTY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Walt Rostow, 1968

LBJ LIBRARY PHOTO BY YOICHI R. OKAMOTO

The Strategist

Walt Rostow in defense of human rights.

BY DANIEL SULLIVAN

A history teacher of mine once quipped that he was annoyed to have to teach post-World War II history because "we know so little and have opinions on so much." This account of Walt Rostow and the escalation of the Vietnam war involuntarily proves the point. The unsubtle title, derived from a remark by Averell Harriman, sounds like the author sharpening his hatchet. In this respect, at least, he does not disappoint.

Though perhaps less well remembered than Robert McNamara or Dean Rusk, Walt Whitman Rostow was an important voice on foreign policy in the administrations of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. A child of Russian immigrants, Rostow made his academic name as a liberal internationalist and theorist of Third World development, for which purpose he supported generous foreign aid. In politics he became a consistent advocate of escalating American involvement in Vietnam. In particular, he urged Kennedy and Johnson to bomb North Vietnam's industrial complex and use ground troops to cut off the North's support for the Viet Cong in the South. He staked out this ground well before anyone else, and persisted in it well after most of the "wise men" advised Johnson to leave the field.

America's Rasputin
Walt Rostow and the Vietnam War
by David Milne
Hill and Wang, 336 pp., $26

For David Milne, Rostow's positions were those of a consummate ideologue, born of anti-Communist zeal and tireless optimism in the face of consistently bad news. More than that, Milne accuses Rostow of suppressing CIA reports that questioned the efficacy of the bombing campaign and highlighting the good news to convince LBJ to keep fighting. Rostow found this ethically unproblematic because he himself believed the stories he spun.

The basic argument of *America's Rasputin* is that Rostow's well-intentioned and sincere zeal for crushing the Communists was a dangerous ideological project that conflicted with reality. This may well be a tenable argument; but one senses in Milne's uncritical hostility towards Rostow's war plan an ideology of its own. It appears in numerous occasions of unscholarly hyperbole—Milne describes Rostow's civil and restrained memos as "pour[ing]" hostility on Robert McNamara—and in Milne's curious dismissal of the Eisenhower administration as "atavistic." It finally becomes apparent that the shadowy target for whom Walt Rostow stands in is Paul Wolfowitz, and by extension, the neoconservative argument for the Iraq war. Milne admits as much when he observes that "today's neoconservatives have taken up Rostow's internationalist, crusading mantle and have run with it to potent effect."

There may be something to the parallel between Rostow and Wolfowitz, or between mid-century liberal Wilsonians and today's neoconservative ones. But in this case the observation seems motivated less by scholarship than by the desire to discredit the Iraq war and its supporters. The narrative reflects this. It primarily recounts the internal debates between hawks like Rostow and the Joint Chiefs and skeptics like the CIA and, eventually, McNamara. And the account soon sounds like a broken record. According to Milne, Rostow's escalation strategies produce little progress on the ground but he continues to advocate more of the same. In almost every chapter Milne reiterates his core objections to Rostow: He failed to appreciate that the Viet Cong were as much a South Vietnamese nationalist movement as a Northern fifth column; he could not see that patriotic belief drove both Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese, and that American bombing only stiffened their resolve. Thus Rostow's consistent position—that bombing the North's industry would scare it out of the war and deprive the Viet Cong of its main source of support—rested on false premises.

Milne's analysis is arguable, but he never takes the trouble to justify his major objections to what became known as the Rostow Thesis. If Milne wants to disprove its premises, he ought to provide more history of the military situa-

Daniel Sullivan is a writer in Chicago.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. And given Milne's leitmotif that ideology motivated Rostow, one would expect an explanation for why the American generals in Vietnam—presumably less invested in academic theories and more cognizant of the actual military situation—largely supported Rostow's calls for escalation. But all we get is the echo chamber of rarified foreign policy debates, to which *America's Rasputin* adds one more self-authenticating voice.

The reader finds in *America's Rasputin* the language of armchair commentary, not historical scholarship: to recall my history teacher, too little knowledge, in terms of research and analysis, and too many opinions. Such may be the fate of most attempts to write the history of times too close for historical distance. Milne too often takes the times and their figures not on their own terms but on the terms of present-day debates and personalities. Indeed, the politics of the Bush years indelibly mark this account.

From that perspective, *America's Rasputin* is interesting for what it shows about a particular position—one which emerged during the Vietnam war and has come into its own during the Iraq war. Milne recognizes that Rostow represents a full-throated, assertive Wilsonian internationalism, and in one of his more insightful passages, juxtaposes it with the realism of George Kennan, with whom Rostow corresponded about Vietnam.

We're familiar with the debate between those who idealistically defend human rights around the globe and those who prefer to stay anchored in American national interest. Despite his antipathy for Rostow's internationalism, Milne does not embrace realism—and certainly not Kennan's version, which was based on a kind of Anglo-American chauvinism. Milne admires John F. Kennedy's first inaugural speech, which George W. Bush's second inaugural plainly evokes. Yet in criticizing Rostow and Kennan, Milne—and, perhaps, some other left-wing critics of U.S. foreign policy—never grasps the tensions in the uncomfortable third position he takes, abhorring in practice the universalist politics he applauds in theory. ♦

Hollywood Hybrid

How the stars are reducing their carbon footprint.

BY JOE QUEENAN

The 2005 bestseller *Freakonomics* introduced a troubling narrative technique. The book was a collaboration between the economist Steven D. Levitt, who supplied the ideas, and *New York Times* writer Stephen J. Dubner, who supplied the prose, with the men listed as coauthors. But in the body of the work Dubner would sometimes refer to his collaborator in the third person, using phrases like "the most brilliant young economist in America" and "a demigod" and "a noetic butterfly," which he lifted from the *New York Times Magazine*.

Living Like Ed
A Guide to the Eco-Friendly Life
by Ed Begley Jr.
Clarkson Potter, 240 pp., $18

In other words: Don't take my word for it that I am a brilliant demigod and a noetic butterfly. Take my ghostwriter's word for it, *and* my word.

Admittedly, this sort of thing takes a bit of brass. Ed Begley Jr., adopts a similar approach in this self-eulogizing guide to leading an "environmentally friendly life." Though Begley himself, a third-echelon movie star, is identified as the author, *Living Like Ed* also contains guest essays (in tinted boxes) by various eco-professionals, who discuss such topics as "silent" gardening or the joys of ecoFoam or mounting a rooftop wind-turbine that will kill fewer birds than other, less ornithophilic turbines. (These appear under the rubric "Ed's Green Friend.")

There is also a series of inserts called "Rachelle's Turn," in which Begley's wife weighs in on what a quirky but wonderful person she has married. Mostly, Rachelle reports that while she, too, is a deeply caring human being, who devotes a great deal of time and energy to conserving energy and defending the environment, she is nowhere near as eco-sensitive as her husband Ed, as no one could be.

Thus, much like Steven D. Levitt, Ed Begley Jr. has enlisted his wife's aid in a self-applauding book that incorporates an additional tier of adulation from convivial eco-entrepreneurs, and then acts as if this supplementary praise were not, in some way, contrived and fulsome.

Knowing how fragile show biz marriages are, this makes you wonder what would happen if the couple ever got divorced, and Rachelle forced Ed to excise all her contributions from the book, complaining that they were extorted from her as part of a systematic pattern of domestic abuse: "I was lying when I said that I admired Ed for climbing up on the roof and broom-cleaning our solar wind panels," she might explain afterwards at a palimony hearing. "The truth is, I thought he was a jerk. I mean, get real."

None of the foregoing should be construed as criticism of Begley himself, much less as criticism of his book. Tenaciously clinging to a patch of the moral high ground occupied by Al Gore, Ben and Jerry, Bono, and the woman who started The Body Shop, Begley addresses his readers from the very pinnacle of the energy-efficient Everest, which is now based in Los Angeles. There is literally nothing in his book that can be denied, gainsayed, or even challenged—whether it is

Joe Queenan is the author, most recently, of Queenan Country: A Reluctant Anglophile's Pilgrimage to the Mother Country.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

installing that avian-friendly wind turbine on the roof, or properly recycling worn-out vegan tennis shoes, or having friends bring styrofoam over to your house so you can all recycle *en famille*. There is literally no environmental issue on which Begley discourses with less than *ex cathedra* finality. That includes the part where he guzzles the nontoxic house cleaner, seemingly to demonstrate that it is safe to consume, but perhaps because he had run out of vegan wine cooler.

To his credit, Begley does not hesitate to discuss such hot-button issues as whether bag people should be prosecuted for filching recyclable cans and bottles out of recycling bins. The problem here is that the money that comes from can and bottle deposits goes a long way toward defraying the cost of recycling glass and paper. By heisting aluminum cans, bag people are sabotaging the entire municipal recycling operation.

Yet despite his horror at such eco-rapine, Begley adopts a temperate tone toward the malefactors, noting: "I would not condone fines or jail terms for homeless folks trying to make a buck." This is where the fault line between right-wing recyclers and left-wing recyclers really lies: Even the most compassionate conservatives believe that bag people and winos should be subjected to the three-eco-strikes-and-you're-out rule, with recidivist scavengers doing hard time in the Big House. Otherwise, they just won't learn.

The basic thrust of *Living Like Ed* is that if more people resembled Ed Begley Jr., the world would be a better place. Clad in his shorts, white calf-length socks, plaid shirt, and vegan tennis shoes, an ensemble seen again and again in a 240-page book padded out with numerous photographs, Begley has gotten it into his head that a lot of people not only want to be like Ed, but to look like Ed. This is not necessarily the case. When daydreaming about Hollywood stars we would like to resemble, most of us think more along the lines of Brad Pitt, George Clooney, perhaps even Ryan Phillippe. I personally have little interest in living like Ed, but would love to live like Johnny Depp. And even if I did learn to live like Ed, I'd still rather look like Colin Farrell. I think this sentiment is fairly widespread; I also think that the energy-saving movement will never gain real traction with Middle America until someone writes a book called *Living Like Keanu*.

Ed Begley Jr. (left), wind turbines

HGTV / ZUMA PRESS

Although the subject is quite serious, and Begley's energy-saving tips radiate a creative zest Leonardo (DaVinci, that is) himself would envy—why fly from Los Angeles to New York when you can drive?—*Living Like Ed* is dry, repetitive, and claustrophobic. It is also unnerving, for in the course of the narrative we learn things about the author we would rather not know. Most of this information is supplied by his long-suffering wife Rachelle.

For starters, she reports that Begley stands outside the bathroom and times her showers to check how much water she is using. (His two children, who do not appear in the book, presumably fled the house years ago.) Second, he drives across the country when he has business on the East Coast because flying is toxic. Third, the day his wife went into labor with their daughter Hayden, he insisted on driving her to the hospital in his electric car, the same car that had once caught fire on Laurel Canyon Boulevard.

Fourth—and this is the really alarming part—after he finally agreed not to drive his pregnant wife to the hospital in his unreliable electric car, he insisted on driving her in his natural gas flex-fuel car—which just happened to be out of natural gas. So the pair had to take a 10-mile detour all the way out to Glendale to fuel up, even though Ed was worried that his wife was going to "deliver right then and there."

As she recalls:

> So he pulled off and went to a gas station, but even then he would not get out of the car and pump the gasoline. So I had to get out of the car—in labor—and pump gasoline.

Rachelle admits that her marriage would probably not have survived "all this craziness" unless Toyota had come out with the Prius, a more obstetrically friendly vehicle. Maybe it would have been better if Toyota had held off a bit longer. Maybe she should have left him at the gas station. ♦

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Weapon of Choice

Inside the mind of an abortion-rights warrior.

BY JOAN FRAWLEY DESMOND

During three decades of protracted abortion wars, reproductive rights activists have sought to attain a singular goal: the rehabilitation of the abortion doctor from social outcast to modern hero. At one point, the mission looked achievable. A rash of clinic violence and killings stirred popular sympathy for the beleaguered physicians. But over time the public has never quite latched onto the idea. Today, fewer doctors are willing to associate themselves with this practice—whether out of moral scruples, or fear of retribution.

This Common Secret
My Journey as an Abortion Doctor
by Susan Wicklund
Public Affairs, 272 pp., $24.95

Yet if there ever were a case to be made for the abortion provider as moral icon, Susan Wicklund would be Exhibit A. Conscientious in her service to patients' needs, indifferent to bottom-line realities, selfless in the face of danger, Wicklund is an ideal standard bearer. And if readers see the good in her, then they will affirm the necessity of opposing laws that bind her capable hands. Surely this explains the "encouragement," from predictable quarters, Wicklund has received to write her spare memoir, awkwardly punctuated with factoids from abortion advocacy groups.

But even if *This Common Secret* shoots to the top of Planned Parenthood's bestseller list, the ordinary reader will find the protagonist a most peculiar and misguided creature. This tale has a moral, but it is not the one intended by the author and her throng of admirers. Instead, it reveals the destructive power of abortion in the lives of its full-grown victims, including the heroine herself.

A big-boned midwestern woman who grew up around guns and craves the solitude of wide-open spaces, Wicklund is not an obvious choice for the role of abortion-rights crusader. She is a late bloomer and ex-hippie who still doesn't own a stick of lipstick. She might have settled for a sales job in a health food store had she not found herself pregnant in early adulthood. Abortions were legal by then, and no physical harm resulted from her procedure. But the physician's uncaring treatment made the experience emotionally traumatic, provoking a search for solutions. Ultimately, Wicklund moved into the field of reproductive health care with the hope of transforming the abortion experience. Compassionate care and complete informed consent would contain the trauma.

When Wicklund embarks on her career, she has a young daughter from her first marriage and a new husband back in college to support. She finds work at three clinics in several cities. Daily life revolves around solitary commutes to small regional airports and long hours at the clinics. Dinner is often a bowl of cereal in her motel room. Soon, her daughter is in the full-time care of her increasingly remote husband, but Wicklund doesn't seem to notice. Her patients' troubles are mesmerizing, and she finds "joy" in shaping their most intimate decisions. Healing their pain, perhaps she will redeem her own life.

Wicklund's resolve will be sorely tested during countless years of anti-abortion protests. Confrontations with clinic protestors and sidewalk counselors become a daily occurrence and slowly broaden in scope. Wicklund's daughter must be driven to school in a police car as protestors move to block the driveway to the family home. The doctor is stalked by a crazed activist who is finally incarcerated. When extremists murder abortion providers, Wicklund doesn't call it quits; she packs a gun. Her worst moment arrives when she must reveal her true profession to her grandmother just before CBS airs a *60 Minutes* feature on her work.

Still, Wicklund battles on, exhibiting a marked lack of interest in unborn life—even when it is precisely documented by ultrasound images displayed in her office. This tendency to compartmentalize the destruction of unborn human life is a practical necessity that produces a number of contradictory positions. For example, Wicklund calms her patients with the view that the embryo is nothing more than human "tissue" requiring no special protection; abortions should be regulated no differently than knee surgery.

Yet she writes at length about the need for "compassionate" care. Why all the fuss if an abortion is nothing more than a routine procedure? She defends her profession's commitment to the vulnerable, insisting that she never railroads patients into a procedure they may regret forever. Yet she opposes parental consent laws designed to prevent the exploitation and coercion of minors. She will be the keeper of "secrets." Parents must cede their moral authority to Wicklund and her like. But her only obvious credential—a willingness to perform abortions—cannot secure our trust.

Is Susan Wicklund a typical abortion doctor? She is certainly a curious figure. Contrary to the stereotypes advanced within the anti-abortion movement, she reveals not a whit of interest in making money or in securing her own happiness. When she tries to sell her clinic, once the fulfillment of her professional dreams, no buyers come forward. Her husband has drifted away. Wicklund's determination is beyond grim. What her supporters would have us applaud as inspiring dedication to an unquestionable good comes off as an unhealthy fixation on a deranged sense of duty. ♦

Joan Frawley Desmond, who writes on religious and social issues for a variety of publications, lives in Maryland.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

'Orfeo' at 400

Monteverdi's gift to music and drama.

BY ALGIS VALIUNAS

Those who love opera can scarcely imagine a world without it. Yet on the very face of it—what a queer notion it is to translate drama into song, and to saturate this nonpareil artistic outpouring with emotion so extravagant that it bears the scantest resemblance even to the most heightened theatrical speech. Opera is theater supercharged, full to bursting, and music is what propels the art to extremes of towering magniloquence, erotic mesmerism, alluring excruciation.

But not everyone goes in for this sort of thing. To Samuel Johnson opera was "an exotic and irrational entertainment." It was the alarming mixture of drama and music that put off Dr. Johnson; neither one in its pure state offended him. Of course, to those who emphatically *do* go in for this sort of thing, the mixture is precisely the attraction. And this past year has been an occasion for celebrating the most eminent of those men who first united music and drama and inaugurated this strange and noble art: It is the 400th anniversary of the first great opera: *Orfeo* by Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643).

Orfeo was not the first opera, pure and simple. *Dafne*, composed by Jacopo Corsi and Jacopo Peri to a libretto by Ottavio Rinuccini, premiered in Florence in 1598; the score has been lost. Two early operatic renditions by Florentine composers of the myth of Orpheus—the sublime singer who ventures into Hades to bring his dead bride, Euridice, back among the living—have survived: Peri's *Euridice* (1600) and Giulio Caccini's *Euridice* (1602). Peri, one of the foremost singers of his time, took the role of Orpheus in his own opera when it was performed at the Pitti Palace to celebrate the wedding of Maria de' Medici and Henri IV of France.

Peri wrote that he was attempting to compose "a form of song which, surpassing ordinary speech, and of a lower sort than sung melody, was halfway between the two." Imitating the speaking voice in song required a novel art—"to be sure never was speech heard to sing"—and Peri's innovation issued in the primordial recitative. In due course, recitative would become what one scholar has called the "connective tissue" of opera, utilitarian and unassuming, which provided the narrative line and filled up the spaces between arias, the flamboyant lyric flights that people really went to the theater to hear. For Claudio Monteverdi, however, recitative was the essence of opera, and he refined Peri's discovery with masterly command.

The primacy of recitative depended upon the intelligibility of the sung text. Counterpoint, or polyphony, in which several independent vocal melodies sounded simultaneously, had been the mainstay of 16th-century music, under such masters as Palestrina. The madrigal, the principal form of secular song in Renaissance Italy, which usually took love for its theme, joined several voices in counterpoint. Monteverdi spent his youth writing madrigals, and became an acknowledged master by his mid-twenties.

By 1600, however, polyphony had pretty well had its day: Critics faulted it for making the sung text indistinct, and composers (including Peri and Caccini) turned their efforts to monody or solo song.

Monody was actually old as the hills, but it received a new impetus from the desire to make the words at least as important as the music. The parallel emergence of *basso continuo*—a system of notation for accompanying instruments in which only the bass notes were written in the score and the upper parts of the chords were improvised—served the dramatic needs of the solo voice. Singers were relieved of the responsibility for patching together the harmony, and the soloist could now focus on the emotional subtleties of the words he was singing. High Renaissance reverence for the classical Greek theater, with its celebrated union of music and word, spurred the quest for a comparable modern art of conjoined powers. The *stile recitativo*, or recitative style, was the outcome of these efforts and the foundation of opera in its earliest youth.

Orfeo was originally presented in February 1607 as a carnival entertainment by the Accademia degli Invaghiti (Academy of the Charmed Ones) at the ducal palace of the Gonzaga family in Mantua. Francesco Gonzaga, the duke's elder son, commissioned the opera, evidently to exhibit his flair for artistic matters, and in rivalry with his brilliant younger brother Ferdinando, an accomplished poet, composer, and linguist. The librettist, Alessandro Striggio, was a court secretary, sometime diplomat, and musician. Monteverdi was the court choirmaster, serving up amusements for secular occasions, writing concert and table and theatrical music. The court's instrumental forces and an expert troupe of solo singers performed regularly under his baton.

The operatic performance took place in a relatively small room, some 30 by 100 feet, in the apartments of Margherita Gonzaga, the widow of the duke of Ferrara, and it was a hit. A second performance followed, and a third was planned but never came off.

Orfeo consists of a prologue and five acts, each act ending with a chorus. La Musica appears in the prologue, announcing her power to soothe the troubled heart and inflame the most frigid mind, and presenting the glory of Orfeo, whose singing tamed wild beasts and made even hell submit to his plaintive strains. In Act I shepherds and nymphs join the tenor Orfeo in celebrating the end to his lonesome sadness that marriage to Euridice will bring. In

Algis Valiunas is a writer in Florida.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Act II his happiness proves short-lived, as a *Messaggiera*, Euridice's best friend Silvia, comes on to tell that Euridice has been bitten by a serpent and is dead. Orfeo vows to bring Euridice back from hell to see the stars again—"*a riveder le stelle*," an allusion to Dante's emergence from the Inferno.

In Act III Orfeo's singing lulls the infernal boatman Caronte, a sepulchral bass, to sleep so he can slip across the River Styx, and the chorus of spirits praises the tireless enterprise of man. In Act IV Proserpine begs Plutone to allow Euridice to return to the world of the living with Orfeo, and Plutone agrees—with the proviso that Orfeo not turn to look at his bride until they have left the underworld. Moved by love, and startled by a noise, Orfeo *does* turn toward Euridice—and loses her a second time. The chorus of spirits faults Orfeo for permitting his emotions to overcome his virtue. In Act V Orfeo mourns his failure; then, according to the 1607 libretto (for which the closing music has been lost), a chorus of bacchantes comes on, and is preparing to tear Orfeo to pieces when the opera ends.

In the published score of 1609, however, the version in which the opera has come down to us, Orfeo's father Apollo, god of the sun and of poetry, talks his son out of his funk and convinces him to enjoy immortal life in heaven, where he shall see Euridice's face forever in the sun and stars. The chorus, never slow to point the moral, observes that "he who sows in sorrow reaps the fruits of all grace."

Monteverdi's artistry in fitting music to word creates a sonic world of exquisite emotional pains and pleasures, with a delicate emphasis on the pains. That an artist working in such a novel form should have so fine a touch is astonishing. As Act I opens, a shepherd sings of "this happy and auspicious day" and one expects his tune to trip along merrily. But the song is reserved and even solemn. And Orfeo's hymn to the sun and ode to his love for Euridice, *Rosa del ciel* ("Rose of Heaven"), begins almost lugubriously, and certainly never rises to what we might call the uplands of operatic joy. (Musicologists tell us that it is written in the Dorian mode, which a 16th-century theorist says hovers between sadness and happiness.) The full-hearted jollity is left to the chorus of nymphs and shepherds, though even they reflect on the round of gladness and grief in human life. For their part, Orfeo and Euridice seem to share a presentiment of affliction. One is reminded of Parmigianino's *Madonna and Child*, in the Uffizi Gallery, in which the infant Christ looks with knowing sorrow at ferocious storm clouds gathering in the distance.

Monteverdi's music explores what comes of suffering as the screw turns. Orfeo's melodious arioso—recitative infused with lyric passion—*Vi ricorda, o bosch'ombrosi* ("Do you recall, oh shady woods") is an outburst of unrestrained gaiety, with its blithely energetic accompaniment. He sings of having come through, of having put behind him his earlier unhappiness, when Euridice still spurned his love.

Then the blow falls out of nowhere. The messenger Silvia enters and sings four curt phrases of plain heartbreak, each beginning with a stabbing high note on the interjection *Ahi*. When she says that Euridice is dead, Orfeo utters a single sharp cry, then is silent with the shock. Silvia's baleful dirge seems to cost her all she has just to get it out of her mouth. The dead tone is relieved only by the sudden urgency with which she describes the futile efforts to revive Euridice.

By comparison, in Peri's *Euridice*, the account by Dafne of Euridice's death is elegiac rather than dramatic, as though she were delivering a funeral oration instead of making the most dreadful announcement of her life. Peri's is by no means a slight achievement, but his opera seems more a pageant than living theater, and it is wondrous to see how far Monteverdi has taken the form just seven years later.

Carolyn Watkinson as Euridice, 1985

FABIAN CEVALLOS / CORBIS SYGMA

Nowhere is Monteverdi's attentiveness to dramatic values more evident than in the aria *Possente spirto* ("Powerful spirit"), which Orfeo sings to Caronte, trying to persuade him to let Orfeo pass into hell. The aria, in six stanzas of terza rima, shows Orfeo the unsurpassed artist exhibiting his flashy excellence, as though performing his most polished contest piece, and Orfeo the bereaved bridegroom loosing his heart's sorrow, as though speaking intimately to a confidant.

The first stanza is a tour de force, which addresses an august personage, the ferryman of hell, in formal importunity; festooned with decorations like a generalissimo's chest, the florid passage evinces respect for the powers of the underworld and demonstrates Orfeo's worthiness to have his plea heard. The second stanza states in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

unadorned pain that Orfeo is no longer alive himself since Euridice's death. The contrast between the gaudy showpiece and the simple declaration of woe could not be starker. The third and fourth stanzas are once again vocally ornate as a muezzin's cry: *Orfeo son io*, he sings—I am Orfeo, and there is no other man like him, who dares to enter hell itself in pursuit of his love.

The final two stanzas, which unabashedly implore Caronte's aid, return to plainspoken directness. A single line caps the aria, in which Orfeo insists with a brash closing flourish that not even the most obdurate spirit can resist his music. But though Orfeo's song touches him, Caronte *does* resist: To show pity would be beneath his dignity. Then an anguished entreaty simply cascades breathlessly from Orfeo's mouth, all artistry forgotten, the man pouring out his harrowed soul. And thereupon Caronte falls asleep. As the critic Andrew Porter has pointed out, it is the simplest music—the humble recitative rather than the resplendent aria—that has overcome him.

In 1608, the year after *Orfeo* was first produced, Monteverdi presented another opera at the Mantuan court, *Arianna*, of which only the title character's famous lament is extant. It has been recorded by such distinguished mezzo-sopranos as Dame Janet Baker and Anne Sofie von Otter. For Mantua, Monteverdi also wrote the *Vespro della Beata Vergine* (1610), Vespers for the Blessed Virgin, one of the most celebrated pieces of sacred music of its time. Then in 1613 Monteverdi accepted the musically peerless appointment as *maestro di capella* at St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. In 1637 opera made its way to Venice, and soon there were four commercial opera houses in town. Monteverdi could not help but get in on the action: *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (Ulysses' Return to His Homeland) premiered in 1639; the now-lost *Le nozze d'Enea con Lavinia* (The Marriage of Aeneas and Lavinia) in 1641; and *L'incoronazione di Poppea* (The Coronation of Poppaea) in 1643, shortly before Monteverdi's death.

Like *Orfeo*, *Il ritorno d'Ulisse*, based on Books 13 and 24 of *The Odyssey*, has to do with human frailty—which is embodied by an allegorical figure in the prologue—and the depth of love and courage that transcends it. This opera is musically ravishing, lovelier and more exciting than *Orfeo*. The music of exuberant youthful desire, as sung by the lovers Melanto and Eurimaco, caroms off the solemn, long-suffering devotion of Ulysses' wife,

Claudio Monteverdi

Penelope, who has waited years for his return from the Trojan War, and whom Melanto tries to cajole (with some of Monteverdi's most gorgeous lyricism) into loving another man.

But Penelope's melancholic severity deflects her suitors' seductive importunities; she sings in hangdog recitative throughout, until Ulysses is back in her arms, when she breaks into the aria *Illustratevi, o Cieli* ("Shine out, oh heavens"), which translates her happiness into that of all nature. The reunited couple's duet finale is a showcase of eloquent vital joy, a perfect affirmation of love and life by those who had been threatened with their loss. *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* is a masterpiece in the name of enduring nobility.

L'incoronazione di Poppea surpasses it, although its subject is (uncharacteristically for Monteverdi) morally gamy to the point of deliquescence: the mutual lust of the Roman emperor Nerone and the beautiful but vicious noblewoman Poppea, whose itch for the imperial crown exceeds even her desire for the emperor's person. The brazen coloratura ridicule that Fortuna directs at Virtu in the prologue, and that Virtu answers in kind, sets the tone for the opera. In *Poppea*, when the splashy *fioriture* come out, and they come out often, something unsavory is usually brewing. In any event, Amore promptly asserts his dominance over the pair of goddesses, and the opera will prove him supreme, in the nastiest way.

The voices of Nerone (a mezzo-soprano or tenor) and Poppea (a soprano) are virtual extensions of their sexual parts, and demonstrate the various shadings of erotic feeling from plaintiveness to playfulness, fever to storm. These high voices are set against the philosopher Seneca, whose basso profundo bespeaks profundity of mind, and who had been Nerone's tutor. In some cases philosophy just doesn't take, and after Seneca opposes Nerone's wish to divorce his wife and marry Poppea, Nerone orders him to commit suicide. The new imperial couple is a matched set of ogres, but the hushed rapturous sensuality of their duet finale, *Pur ti miro* ("I gaze at you"), almost forgives them everything.

Of course, Monteverdi's audience would have been expected to know that Tacitus said Nero kicked Poppaea to death while she was pregnant, and that Suetonius added he did so because she nagged him about spending so much time at the horse races.

These are exotic and irrational creatures that Monteverdi depicts, but Dr. Johnson's witty dismissal of operatic entertainment cannot stand in Monteverdi's case. His is a rational and highly moral art. The beautiful music he gives even his worst characters sometimes belies, but ultimately reveals, their deformed souls. The beautiful music he gives his heroes and heroines evokes a sublimity that lasts in the listener's mind, like wisdom embodied.

Monteverdi's formal mastery, which can only be called precocious in a form so newly emergent, ever serves a lofty vision of human grace and fortitude, befitting what will become, in his greatest successors' hands, the noblest of the arts. ♦

IMAGNO / AUSTRIAN ARCHIVES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A $uperhero's Saga

How the rich are different from you and me.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The greatest piece of editorial advice ever given about a screenplay was offered by a comedy writer named Jerry Belson. Rodney Dangerfield wanted to make a movie in which his character would enter college as a 50-year-old freshman, but no one working on it could figure out how to get him there or why he would do it.

"Make Rodney rich," Belson said. For if Rodney's character were rich, he would not be acting out of desperation, or self-consciousness, or a lack of self-worth, but rather as a lark. And he would feel free to do whatever he wanted without fearing the consequences. He would, in other words, live the dream life of every college student—hiring a contractor to gussy up his dorm room, and hiring Kurt Vonnegut to ghostwrite a paper for him about Kurt Vonnegut.

Belson's three words were the salvation of *Back to School*, one of the most successful comedies of the 1980s. Belson understood that few things in life are as much fun as thinking about what you would do if you had unlimited resources. And that brings us to *Iron Man*, which earned $105 million at the box office in its first weekend and has, at long last, made the brilliant ex-con Robert Downey Jr. into a bona fide star. Its huge take ensures *Iron Man* will be a movie Hollywood will emulate.

But it will do so for the wrong reason, alas. Hollywood will think that the public loves *Iron Man* because it is a superhero movie, a fantasy in which an ordinary person finds himself endowed with supernatural abilities. In fact, the public loves *Iron Man* because it is a rich-guy movie—a type of movie that offers the same kind of fantasy fulfillment without the supernatural nonsense.

Iron Man
Directed by Jon Favreau

In *Iron Man*, a guy builds a suit of flying armor. It spits fire, shoots bullets, and releases missiles. When he wears it, he looks like a robot. He saves a few people in a car. He kills a few terrorists. He blows up some bombs. All in all, as superheroes go, Iron Man is not all that accomplished, and if being a superhero were all there were to this movie, the whole business would have been a dreadful bore and a flop.

What saves *Iron Man* is that its protagonist is a billionaire who really, really loves his money. Tony Stark, the character played by Downey, is a sybaritic fellow who can indulge any passion he wishes and indulges all of them, all the time. He blows off a dinner where he is winning an award to play craps in Las Vegas. His private plane has a stripper pole that rises from the floor, around which his stewardesses dance. His look seems to have been cryogenically frozen in the 1970s, with Downey sporting the beard worn by Roy Scheider in *All That Jazz* and the sunglasses worn by Jill Clayburgh in *An Unmarried Woman*.

He doesn't just spend his money on cars and planes and women; Tony is also a brilliant inventor, and can make anything out of anything. Usually he does his work in the basement of his Richard Neutra house, which sits atop a cliff in Malibu. He lives there alone, save for a chatty computer system named Travis and a robotic mini-crane equipped with artificial intelligence, which Tony treats as though it were an overenthusiastic puppy. He is looked after by three people—his assistant Pepper Potts (a charming Gwyneth Paltrow), his friend Colonel Rhodes (a delightful Terrence Howard), and his surrogate father, Obadiah Stane (an unrecognizably Gene Hackman-like Jeff Bridges). They all roll their eyes and smile at Tony Stark's irresponsibility, because he is an amusing genius—and, after all, if you were as rich as he is, what would you do?

The fantasy wish-fulfillment that makes *Iron Man* so winning is not being a guy who can fly around and shoot fire from his robot suit. It's being the guy with all the money in the world, the guy who can afford to make that suit. True, Tony goes through various trials and tribulations centering on a nuclear-powered pacemaker. And he suffers pangs of conscience because he is a weapons manufacturer and makes things that kill people, a fact that only seems to have dawned on him at some point in his early forties. But Downey's immensely entertaining performance—which vies with Johnny Depp's in *Pirates of the Caribbean* as the most notable career shift in recent history—goes easy on the tormented stuff and very heavy on the exhilarating freedom enjoyed by Tony Stark.

The movies that *Iron Man* evokes are not the other superhero pictures but the screwball comedies of the 1930s and the overheated Texas melodramas of the 1950s and '60s—movies in which audiences luxuriated in the luxury on screen. It's too bad *Iron Man* has to revert to form in its last 15 minutes, with two boring robots punching each other on the streets of Los Angeles. But it does conclude on Downey's quicksilver face as Tony punctures a key element of superhero mythmaking. It's a great kicker, perfect for the rich guy who really does have everything. ♦

John Podhoretz, editorial director of Commentary, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Snickers and M&Ms candy maker Mars Inc. is buying Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co., which makes Juicy Fruit and Doublemint gum and Life Savers, for about $23 billion in cash. The agreement announced Monday has the potential to transform the globe's confectionary industry and could spawn a series of other combinations."

—Associated Press, *April 28, 2008*

Parody

July 1, 2008

Mars Attacks: Candy Giant Craves Global Domination, Plans to Melt Competition

By Charles Bucket
Washington Post Staff Writer

CHICAGO — After swallowing the Wm. Wrigley Jr. Co. for $23 billion, Mars is now eyeing both Hershey's and Cadbury with the clear intent of conquering the world of confection. The maker of Snickers was clearly not satisfied with merely becoming the largest candy maker on the planet.

The ruthless ambitions of Mars became evident in the immediate aftermath of the Wrigley buyout: Within 24 hours, both chewing gums Freedent and Big Red ceased to exist. According to Mars global president Paul S. Michaels, "I don't think anyone has purchased a Big Red to kiss a little longer, hold tight a little longer, or stay close a little longer since 1982. And as for Freedent, frankly, I didn't know we were still making it—in fact, there doesn't seem to be any proof anyone under the age of 65 has ever enjoyed nonsticky gum."

"It seemed like a great deal at the time," said Wrigley chairman William Wrigley Jr. before accidentally falling into a river of pure chocolate inside Warren Buffett's compound three days ago. He has yet to be found. "Let's just say we found a way to *sweeten* the deal," Mr. Buffett, Mars's cofinancier, cryptically remarked before issuing a sinister laugh. "Mr. Wrigley has had plenty of time to *chew* over the details. I hate to *burst his bubble*...." (Mr. Buffett insisted on the italics.)

REUTERS / JASON REED

Warren Buffett laughingly describes his new, three-course dinner gum: "It's scrumdidilyumptious!"

According to a leaked memo, Mars is now preparing to take on Hershey's and Cadbury, though most analysts doubt it can win a two-front war. "Indeed, Mars may end up biting off more than it can chew," noted one expert. Meanwhile, Hershey's CEO David J. West said Mars was asking for "mounds" of trouble and called the threat "nutty and outrageous. Why, it's nutrageous."

Mars's Paul Michaels insists his company merely wants some breathing space for its products. On the other hand, Warren Buffett had hoped that buying out Wrigley would allow him access to the Doublemint Twins. (He soon learned the twins are fictional and that he would not be doubling his pleasure anytime soon.) While Mr. Buffett was watching the Chicago Cubs at the newly renamed Skittles Stadium,

See ZAGNUT, *A9, Col.5*

Even Nader Urges Clinton to Quit

By Dan Balz
Washington Post Staff Writer

Independent presidential candidate Ralph Nader said yesterday even he thought Senator Hillary Clinton should give up her ratic nomination.

"Even I can't believe she still wants to fight it at the convention. Hey lady, get a clue!" said Mr. Nader, long considered a spoil sport and scourge of the Democratic party. But Mrs. Clinton and her husband refuse to yield. At a townhall meeting last night in yet another backwater where bitter

the weekly Standard
May 19, 2008

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED